On Discerning the Realm of God in the Thought of Kabbalah and Tantra

This paper explores the way in which God as the infinite ground of existence is discerned by the imagination and understanding. The realization of the apophatic divine is facilitated by the working of the human mind, which means that the manifold nature of thinking establishes the presence of God. In the metaphysical speculations of kabbalah and tantra the singular light of Ein Sof and Paramaśiva intersects with the human imagination, and is refracted into a multiple display of understanding. So the mind acts as a prism through which God is conceptualized and delineated. It constitutes a mediated envisaging of the Absolute, and the corollary of this perception is the engendering of the divine presence, notably as the feminine Shekhinah and Śakti. In short, in these two apparently different traditions—of kabbalistic and tantric thought—there is a detectably common theme of the notions of activity and force in creation as betokening a feminine representation of God's being.[1]

The Presence of God

In the Bible frequent reference is made to the anthropomorphic nature of God. He is a figure that may be seen either indirectly (Exodus 33:20–23) or directly (Numbers 12:8).[2] It is said that God dwells in a particular place, namely in the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:8–9), and through this portable sanctuary of worship, erected by Moses in the wilderness, God comes to abide generally among the people of Israel (Exodus 29:45–46). The 'cloud' that is said to cover this 'Tent of Meeting' alludes to the manifestation of God's presence (ibid., 40:34–38). Yet, according to received Jewish theology God is transcendent and so exists beyond the created universe, and is not cognizable or representable.[3] For the rabbinic sages[4] this raised the question of how human beings could interact with God, if there is a distance that is tantamount to an abyss. As they were concerned with discerning the presence of God on earth, they coined a new word, 'Shekhinah', from the abstract noun *shekhinah*, which is derived from the Hebrew root *shakhan*, 'to dwell, reside, abide', and which means literally God's 'indwelling' or 'presence' amongst the people of Israel.[5] The suffix *-ah* indicates feminine gender; but this does not necessarily imply a sexed realization. The rabbis considered that the Shekhinah is manifested as a divine shining light, which is refulgent as the Sun and all pervasive.[6] In rabbinic understanding it seems that the Shekhinah is indistinct from the male God, and is just his 'mode of existence' on earth; that is to say, Shekhinah is actually the phenomenal appearance of God to Moses.[7] Over time however, according to Schäfer, a distinction began to arise, if ambiguously and tentatively, driven probably by the many circumlocutory expressions for God. Although there is a 'clear tendency' towards the personification of Shekhinah in rabbinic literature, which becomes openly so in the late rabbinic and post-rabbinic periods, the possibility of naturalizing the feminine gender is avoided or ignored. The Shekhinah retains its male status.[8]

The Shekhinah is especially realized in the speculative literature of the *Hekhalot* (palace) and *Merkavah* (chariot), which deals with the visions of Ezekiel.[9] The main theme here is one of ascending to the supernal heights, as the mystic travels through seven celestial palaces, or halls, to enter the throne room, where he beholds the glory (*kavod*) of God, which is the 'body of the Presence' (*guf ha-Shekhinah*), and which is seated upon the chariot.[10] This is

either the luminous beauty and radiant splendour of the King (God), or the appearance in corporeal and anthropomorphic form of the invisible and transcendent God;[11] at any rate, it is a dangerous undertaking to view it.[12] For their part, the early medieval Jewish philosophers reacted against the monarchical and visual representations of God (as for example in 1 Kings 22:19, Ezekiel 1:26, and Daniel 7:9), in which God, or at least his *demut* ('likeness' or 'form') or *ṣelem* ('image') is depicted as being seated on a throne.[13] In order to preserve the transcendence of God the philosophers sought to distinguish the Shekhinah as an independent entity, who then acts as intermediary between God and humans, and is called the *kavod ha-Shem*, 'the Glory of the Name'. Saadiah Gaon (882–942) introduced the idea that the divine glory is a *created* light of God, and thus he 'identifies the glory, *Shekhinah*, and Holy Spirit (*ruaḥ ha-qodesh*), as well as the throne of glory (*kisse' ha-kavod*), with the subtle and rarefied substance he calls the "second air" from which all things emanated'.[14] Similarly, for Judah ben Barzillai of Barcelona (ca. 1035–1105) every vision of God is only referring to the 'first light created by God', identified variously as 'glory (*kavod*), *Shekhinah*, Holy Spirit (*ruaḥ ha-qodesh*), and splendor (*hod*)'.[15] In all their speculative interpretations, the medieval Jewish philosophers did not remark on the gender of Kavod/Shekhinah, and it is asexual, or if anything, male.[16] During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Ḥasidei Ashkenaz ('the devout of Germany'), developed the idea of 'throne mysticism', so called, and conceived of divinity as suffused with light; indeed, divine being is just illumination.[17] In sum, the hidden God in its visible manifestation is 'called alternately *Shekhinah* (Divine Presence), *Keruv* (Cherub), *Kavod* (Glory), and *Gedulah* (Greatness)'; and accordingly, the Shekhinah 'can assume a visible form in the guise of fire and clouds'.[18]

Shekhinah achieves most explicit form in the medieval literature of the kabbalah, which sees itself as standing in the line of the Oral Law begun by Moses at Mount Sinai.[19] According to kabbalistic doctrine, the absolute nature of God, called Ein Sof ('The Infinite', lit., 'Endless'), is transcendent and unknowable, and would ideally be referred to impersonally, except there is no neuter gender in Hebrew, where all nouns are grammatically masculine or feminine.[20] Its ten phenomenal aspects are represented by many and various designations; e.g., *ma'amarot* and *dibburim* ('sayings'), *shemot* ('names'), *orot* ('lights'), *koḥot* ('powers'), *middot* ('attributes' or 'qualities'), and *sefirot* ('numerals').[21] These are effected as hypostases of a particular facet of God, and they dynamically express the potentiality of Ein Sof, as an active realization of divine existence.[22] God, then, may be established as a unity, in the Divine Name, yet it is realized as a composite, a multifaceted light. If Ein Sof is unknowable, then the *sefirot* are the means by which this transcendent reality can be discerned. The putative reduction of the divine to ten categories does not detract from the infinite nature of God.[23] Importantly, while the ontological status of the *sefirot* may be ambiguous, the psychological status seems to be clear enough.[24] A popular etymology has it that 'sefirot' is derived from *sappir*, sapphire, since they are collectively like a jewel that reflects and sparkles in the divine light.[25] What does the *Zohar* say about the nature of divine being? Cosmically, Ein Sof is the 'transcendent soul that cannot be grasped', which enwraps itself in the crystal radiance of Keter, and produces the *sefirot*, as if dripping pearls, 'drop by drop'.[26] Ḥokhmah is the 'supreme royal treasurer' who is in charge of the royal treasury, which is symbolically Binah. As an isomorph of this high *sefirah*, Shekhinah follows her in being a treasury, now with Yesod as the treasurer.[27] The *sefirot* are a precious token of God's being, and Shekhinah as a portion of the divine sapphirine radiance is the most precious of all; she is naturally correlated with a sparkling jewel.[28] She is the place of precious stones, where wisdom is refined.[29] The Shekhinah is known by a range of symbolic representations, such as earth, land, palace, sea, and vessel.[30] As such, she is revealed in

manifold ways. Scholem remarks that '[t]he *Bahir* has no doubts as to the essentially female nature of the *Shekhinah*; only rarely does it use neuter symbols for the *Shekhinah*'.[31]

If by virtue of its absolute nature as light, Ein Sof is blindingly invisible and so cannot be directly seen, what chance is there for developing a divine consciousness, one by which to realize, or comprehend, God? There is a longstanding religious and philosophical tradition in which sight is essentially related to divine realization;[32] indeed, the word insight conveys acute awareness.[33] It is the mental faculties that functionally provide the wherewithal to recognize the nearness of God. This implies that understanding is Sun-like as it sheds the illumination for discerning that which is hidden away, secreted in the corners of the imagination. Metaphorically, God is to be seen in the misty gloaming of the imagination.[34] Just as the physical Sun provides the light by which human eyes can see the world, so the mental Sun provides the light by which to see the divine world.[35] The working of the mind, as the Sun of consciousness, is the generative means for metaphorizing God. In the *Zohar*, the Sun is symbolized by Tiferet, the unified divine name, and the Moon is symbolized by Shekhinah, the creative divine name.[36] The corollary of this is that Shekhinah is likened to the rays of the sun.[37] The kabbalist formulates an impression of God through the dappling play of bright light, and as he is inclined to discern God he paints a picture in his imagination. This makes him an Impressionist painter as he renders the state of divine consciousness.[38] As a compositional glimpse of God, it becomes a diorama of the mind, and a brilliant forum for prayer.[39] The kabbalist is depicting God in a painterly distribution of supernal qualities, as an abstract portrait of the universe.[40] The natural allusion for this colourful display is that of the rainbow (קשת, *keshet*), and the prompt for such an association is the description by Ezekiel of the radiant glory that surrounds the heavenly chariot. The various supposed colours comprising the rainbow—white (*lavan*), red (*'adom*), and green (*yaroq*)—denote the respective *sefirah* of Ḥesed, Gevurah, and Tiferet, and represent the splendour of God manifestly revealed in the cloud of Shekhinah.[41] As the visionary rainbow glory of God (YHVH), Shekhinah conducts the world in accordance with the sefirotic colours,[42] symbolically realized in greatness (*Gedullah*), judgement (*Din*), and compassion (*Raḥamim*). She is the crystal by which the blended colours of God are refracted, who makes apparent the spectrum of divinity, and who acts as the refractor of divine light.[43] Anthropomorphically, one can say that the white light of divinity, the undifferentiated consciousness of God (evidenced initially in the first *sefirah*, Keter), is refracted into reality as the differentiated consciousness by the order of human perception.[44] An obscure episode in the *Zohar* refers to the dispersal of light through the universe, as a diffractive movement into seven abysses, and as an expansive web of swirling colours.[45]

The realm of the Godhead is an energetic interplay of forces. The book *Bahir* prefigures the vigorous divine outlook of the kabbalah, given as one in which 'God is an amalgam of dynamic powers perpetually in a state of ebb and flow. This dynamic being is subject to continuous inner movement and fluidity'.[46] The displacement of Ein Sof into manifestation represents a spreading out of the divine nature. It is as if the will of God is a stone thrown into the tranquil pond of his own divine life, with the *sefirot* as the ripples of divine being that propagate to the edge of reality. In the *Zohar* the emanatory appearance is pictured in terms of rushing and streaming water, as the flow of divine consciousness.[47] A prominent theme, which is employed to indicate the universal branching, is the biblical allusion to the river that issues from Eden and waters the garden, from whence it divides into four rivers (Genesis 2:10).[48] Tiferet is the gushing source and Shekhinah is the blooming recipient. She is called Daughter of Gallim, the daughter, that is, of the higher *sefirot*, namely Ḥesed, Gevurah, and Tiferet, who respectively symbolize the biblical patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and

who ‘enacted *mitsvot* as profusely as גלי הים (*gallei ha-yam*), the waves of the sea’.[49] Moreover, the merging streams of the divine that flow into Shekhinah from the *sefirot* above are known as *Gallim*, ‘waves’ of emanation.[50] As the confluence of this emanatory flow, Shekhinah is the supernal sea into which the sefirotic rivers empty.[51] The myth of the Tower of Babel, with its cautionary tale on hubris, is indicative of the differentiation brought about through Shekhinah, from whence ‘division ensues’ in the universe. This wicked behaviour of the Babylonians is likened to the turbulent activity of the sea.[52] God has the power to still the raging of the sea: ‘When the sea leaps with its rollers, abysses billowing and plunging, the blessed Holy One transmits a single ray, pulling its waves, assuaging its rage, unknown to anyone’.[53] The state of agitation demonstrates the judgemental actions of Shekhinah, where the ships are rocked and the fish are scattered.[54] Symbolically, the sea and the action of her waves is related to the maternal and sensual realm, and hence the feminine. This association of waves with the senses is echoed in the idea that Lilith is the raging ocean waves that may beguile the kabbalist at his conjugal hour.[55] On a more positive note, the vastness of the ocean is related to the Torah;[56] and so the hermeneutic realization of God’s presence, Shekhinah—as the essential Word—is the surging narrative of divine consciousness as it moves over the scriptural depths of Wisdom. The Torah is a treasure, which is housed in the sea-chest that is buried in the deeps of the imagination.[57] The idea of the dynamic ocean is a salient metaphor for the kabbalistic mystical journey, or experience of divine consciousness, and has been described by one scholar as an ‘experiential wave’.[58]

Ein Sof is the paragon of light that cannot be seen, but it may be observed in action, in the discernible realization of the *sefirot*.[59] The *sefirot* act as a filter reducing the glare of God. Rabbi Shimon Lavi (sixteenth century) likens the emanation of the *sefirot* to a concealing and clothing of Ein Sof: ‘This is like wishing to gaze at the dazzling sun. Its dazzle conceals it, for you cannot look at its overwhelming brilliance’.[60] It has been said moreover that the *sefirot* are like sunlight through a stained glass window. From this, Cordovero uses the analogy of coloured vessels: as the white light of Ein Sof passes into them it changes colour; but this involves only a perceptual change of the light on the part of the observer.[61] Shekhinah is said to be without light of her own, but she does receive the light of the upper *sefirot*, ‘as in a crystal facing the sun’, and reflects or refracts this light.[62] It is right that *Shekhinah* is established as the heavenly Jerusalem, for she is the City of God, a veritable crystal domain.[63] The extraordinary light of the universe is demarcated; for Shekhinah, as the tenth and final *sefirah*, marks ‘the boundary between the divine and nondivine world’.[64] She is, in other words, ‘situated between the world of light and the physical universe’.[65] Given that divinity is characterized by its illuminative quality, one might say that there is a wall of light between God and the world.[66] This idea of a glowing wall may be taken to signify the indirectness of sighting the divine: ‘Whoever attains seeing will see through knowing and understanding, like someone seeing from behind a wall’.[67] However, at least in praying diligently the master kabbalist is attempting to make this ‘wall of Shekhinah’ diaphanous and so to pass into God.[68] As a majestic divine consciousness, the realization of Shekhinah is the entryway into the realm of God—for she is a concealed panel in the wall of the mind. In psychological terms, the wall of imaginative understanding is made of crystalline glass.

The Power of God

The notion of Shekhinah as the presence of God (Ein Sof)—that which reveals what is otherwise hidden from human ken—might be corresponded in some ways with Indian ideas about the appearance of Brahman, the Absolute, the All.[69] In tantric theology, if I can use that term, Brahman is differentiated into Śiva and *śakti* as a bifurcatory showing of divine being.

Śiva is the possessor of power, *śakti*, which is reified in the mould of Śakti. The concept of *śakti* (a feminine noun) is a hallmark of monistic or non-dual tantric explorations of the Godhead.[70] The word *śakti* derives from the verb root *śak* and means 'the power to produce an effect, capability, efficiency or potency'. In the Ṛg Veda the word occurs in the sense of 'capacity'; as *vajra*, the thunderbolt; as *karma*, the power to act; and as the proper name of a type of weapon.[71] An association is made between this notion of 'power' and the female consorts of the gods; here then, *śakti* assumes female characteristics. This is also the case when she is related to *mantra*s; and in that respect, these 'female creative forces' are unified in the conception of *vāk* or 'speech', which entails that Brahman emanates the universe by a process of utterance, and so is conceived as *śabdabrahman* (Word-Brahman).[72] In the various philosophical schools, such as Mīmāṃsā, Nyāya, and Advaita Vedānta, as well as the metaphysical speculations of Śaiva–Śākta tantra, *śakti* is represented as a cyclic force; while in the literature of the Purāṇas, *śakti* is personified as she rewards her devotees or punishes demons. Hymns of praise (*stotra*s) are recited in her honor.[73] The outstanding text in this regard is the *Devī-Māhātmya* (*The Glorification of the Goddess*) written in the sixth century, which is included as part of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, and which describes the activities of the *Mātṛkās*, or seven Mothers, who are created from the energies of the gods Brahma and Śiva, etc.[74] A further encomium appears as the *Devī Gītā*, which is part of the *Devī-Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.[75] There are, then, two interrelated, and not mutually exclusive, aspects to *śakti*: the philosophical category of force and the psychological category of goddess. It will be useful in this essay to distinguish the two marginally by writing the former as *śakti* and the latter as Śakti.[76] As a way of conceptualizing the nature of reality as absolute or ultimate (*brahman*)—either forceful or hypostatic—the female divine is pervasive: in her flowing through the interstices of life, as *śakti*, and in her vitally abiding presence, as Śakti.

The role of *Śakti* in the perception of God (the Absolute) is set out in a deliberate way in the Śaiva āgamas or tantras, within the division known as the Trika ('Triad'), and as epitomized by the *Pratyabhijñā*, or Doctrine of Recognition,[77] and the *Spanda*, or Doctrine of Vibration.[78] Śiva is understood as being a radiant consciousness (*cit*, *saṃvid*),[79] a pure light (*prakāśa*),[80] who is transcendent, or more accurately, hidden in himself as the ground of existence. As an 'undivided light', Śiva cannot be 'perceived'.[81] He is imperceptible, i.e., indistinguishable, because oneself (*ātman* or *svabhāva*) as identical with Śiva, actually is that light. This eternal illumination is 'all-sustaining';[82] nothing exists outside it, and so Śiva's presence is all-pervasive.[83] His brilliance is presented to the spiritual senses by the process of *śakti*, and through the screen of imagination he becomes perceptible, i.e., distinguisable.[84] As the life of the world, the light of Śiva is sentient since it is fundamentally his own consciousness on display, and it has as its inherent nature reflective awareness (*vimarśa*), which is just called *śakti*.[85] The divine light is manifested as the spread of reality, as conceptualized in the thirty-six *tattva*s, which are 'cosmic categories or ontic levels of the manifestation'.[86] As a phenomenal unfoldment of divine consciousness, the world of disparate objects is perceived through the differentiating actions of human consciousness.[87] The mind is therefore ordinarily fragmented in comparison with the unified divine mind. Śiva chooses to create—or strictly speaking, emanate—the universe as he freely 'moves' throughout his consciousness,[88] by dint of the sovereign exercise of his power—his supreme energy—*svātantryaśakti*,[89] which has three aspects; namely, the power of will (or desire), *icchāśakti*, the power of knowledge, *jnañāśakti*, and the power of action, *kriyāśakti*.[90] Manifest reality appears then by the triple function of *śakti*, and she serves as the mechanism for the presenting being and representational distinction of Śiva in cognizable reality, and reflectively arrays his light as the world of objects.[91] The variety of the extant universe is conditional. Abhinavagupta proclaims: 'We bow to that Śiva, because of resting on whom, as

the only place of rest, the innumerable powers, produce various effects, just as gems do on the variegated light'.[92] She is the sapphire light of Śiva.[93] Although Śiva lives in the shimmering nature of his own Reality—divine and mundane—he suffers no change; and even the human Self, as a contraction of Śiva, though it imaginatively perceives this magnificent play of light, remains unchanged in the face of a moving gallery of images. This spectacle of divine colours is acknowledged through the mind acting as a prism, which is composed of *śakti*, and which allows the passage into discursive reality. It is a metaphorical playground.[94] The human mind is somewhat like a crystal in its ability to reflect the world, and this reflecting capacity allows a determination of objective reality. The random, undifferentiated light of Śiva is polarized by his power (*śakti*) of self-awareness, and subjectively beamed into objectivity. According to the Trika doctrine the highest reality, or *ātman* principle, 'is both immanent in the universe and transcends it'.[95]

Śiva, as the 'Great Lord' (Maheśvara), is a unity who contains within himself the 'multitude of objects' that will receive manifest expression as he enters the body and mind of the human self. It is a freely driven process of epistemic delimiting of Śiva's otherwise unlimited comprehension.[96] As the intuitive light (*pratibhā*) he is 'influenced (*rūṣitā*) by the succession of all the various objects', yet he remains overall 'consciousness devoid of succession and limit'. This variegated light rests internally in the knowing subject, the 'self', and 'pervades the times of all the cognitive acts (*sarvasaṃvitkālavyāpī*)'.[97] Characteristically, the light of matter is limited, whereas the light of consciousness is unlimited.[98] From a tantric point of view, the belief that one's field of action is constrained and unwhole is erroneous, for it is really without limit. The perception of the world of different objects as being distinct from the I is due to the *tattva* (principle) of *māyā*.[99] Put another way, it is the power of *māyā* that results in the differentiation of (objective) reality, and the consequent obscuration (*tirodhāna*) of one's identity with Śiva.[100] What appear to be differentiated objects to the human mind are not ultimately so, since those objects themselves partake of Śiva's consciousness, although they 'colour' that divine light.[101] The ground of being is in itself colourless.[102] In a manner of speaking, the Godhead is disaggregated by the progress of *śakti*, and so mundanity is discontinuous light-consciousness, while divinity is continuous light-consciousness.[103] The goal for the tantric practitioner, or *sādhaka* (masc.) is to become indeterminately aware; that is, free of limiting thought-constructs (*nirvikalpa*).[104] The constructive nature of ordinary human consciousness represents a Self-veiling, and by removing this conceptual cover one comes into a state of recognition.[105] In so doing, one becomes a liberated being (*jīvanmukta*), a condition of spiritual perfection which is acquitted as an embodied enlightenment. In this respect, the *siddha* 'becomes coequal with Śiva as the possessor and wielder of the cosmic powers of creation, maintenance, and dissolution, and indeed, achieves in some cases a form of bodily divinization'.[106] In *Pratyabhijñā*, the egoic self is a distillation of the universe, and recognition of divinity brings with it the notion of absolute ego-consciousness. It is a state of completeness, or complete knowledge.[107] Therefore, one is not constituted differently from that resplendent consciousness, the shining light of God, and to acknowledge otherwise is only to be under the confinement of *māyāśakti*, the 'force of obscuration', as Abhinavagupta puts it.[108] In other words, the unity of God is dichotomized by this, his own power, which is conceived as feminine. It represents a multitudinous unfurling, and Śakti is regaled with a plethora of names.

In the soteriology of *Pratyabhijñā*, liberation (*mokśa* or *mukti*) is attained simply by recognizing that oneself is Śiva, the summit of consciousness, and all the functions of human cognition—perceptual knowledge (*jñāna*), imagination (*saṃkalpaḥ*), and determination (*adhyavasāyaḥ*)—are due to the Lord's differentiating power (*māyā-śakti*).[109] Śiva pervades

these mental elements, and sustains perceptual reality. As Kallaṭabhaṭṭa explains: 'one's own essential nature (*ātmasvabhāva*) threads through every (mental state) and has the power to do everything'.[110] It is a holy string of divine consciousness that ties the soul to the universe. As said above, the cognition of the light of divinity afforded by the unique awareness of 'I' consciousness (*ahaṃ-parāmarśa*) is indeterminate, but the cognition of the light of divinity afforded by the fractured awareness of 'this' consciousness (*idaṃ-parāmarśa*) is determinate.[111] Differentiation connotes a sequence (*krama*) of space and time, which needs to be unified in contemplative awareness in order to discern the hidden ground of god-consciousness (*brahman*).[112] Śiva innately dwells with everything that is directly perceived, i.e., phenomenal reality, but he usually remains invisible, owing to the delusion caused by his *māyā*, and it is only through the recognition of one's free powers of knowledge and action that Śiva is able to be clearly discriminated.[113] For the adept, in a state of divine awareness, the light of Śiva is perpendicular to the mind and normally intersects understanding, but for the non-adept, in a state of unawareness, the light of Śiva is parallel to the mind and there is a gap in understanding. In essence, the tantric God is 'there', clear to behold; it merely requires a realization of that fact, and this is achieved by working with *śakti*.[114] To the undiscerning mind, God is blurry or fuzzy.[115] In the perceptive state of unitary consciousness all objects come into view, even if 'obscured by (their distance in) time or space', according to Rājānaka Rāma.[116] Dyczkowski explains that whereas in the *Pratyabhijñā* liberation is achieved through recognizing one's own inherent power (*śakti*), in the *Spanda* liberation is achieved through experiencing the divine pulse of consciousness.[117] The acquisition by the *yogi* of this internal pulse-power means the incorporation of the universe to himself.[118] He strives constantly to achieve that state of being.[119] The relationship of *śakti* to Śiva as his emanatory appearance is essential and like 'heat to the fire and rays to the sun'.[120] Whereas in tantric symbolism Śiva is substantively correlated with the Sun,[121] or with the Moon, as illuminative, *śakti* is correlated with the perceptible rays of light that stream to the inner eye.[122]

It is taught that Śiva, or Bhairava (as he is also known, in his fearsome incarnation), generates phenomenal reality through 'exertion' (*udyoga*), 'expansion' (*unmeṣa*), and 'upsurge' (*udyama*), and that he abides in the universe 'in the brilliant radiance of (His) own vibration (*parispanda*)'.[123] The accomplished *yogi* is absorbed into this fullness, and so he experiences 'the aesthetic delight (*rasa*) which is the nectar of (Bhairava's) power of knowledge and action'.[124] It simply allows him to relish the sensational power of absorption in his own true nature and to be saturated with wonder. A central theme of non-dual Śaivism is the role of the presaging movement of reality; that is, although Śiva is motionless (*nistaraṅga*) his consciousness exhibits a subtle vibration (*spanda*), which gradually increases in amplitude until it becomes phenomenally apparent. Following Somānanda, Abhinavagupta explains that *spanda*, or vibration, 'is the essential nature of Consciousness', and it is a 'slight movement', a 'slight pulsation' that 'consist[s] of succession-less wondrous delight'. This has been described by the term *urmi*, 'billow', and is essentially 'of the nature of the union of Śiva–Śakti'.[125] The waves of light-consciousness (*saṃvid*) constitute the touch of realization.[126] In a vivid terrestrial metaphor, Bhairava is likened to the deep ocean that brims with power, while the swelling waves of consciousness that flood reality are just the objects of perception.[127] The idea that the ocean creates surf and foam through the conjunction of its waves is applied to the notion of manifestation as arising from the waves of *śakti*s.[128] That the universe is not separate from consciousness is only to admit that waves are not external to water.[129] As a related observation, the objects of knowledge dissolve in the knower.[130] The periods of manifestation are an endless rehearsal of energy (*śakti*), and so it is said, according to 'traditional scripture', that the goddess 'is the wave of the ocean of consciousness'.[131] These waves indeed are the variegated aspects of the universe.[132] The

world is born of the coupling of action and knowledge. Dyczkowski explains that in contemplating the highest state of consciousness, namely the Transmental (*unmanā*), the *yogi* aims at 'achiev[ing] a state of repose in the Unstruck Sound that resounds in the Heart'.[133] All those 'waves of mental and sensory activity' that overflow the mind must be quelled in order to reach a state of quietude (or tranquillity), by consent a waveless state of mind.[134] The waves of manifestation are here becalmed.[135] Metaphorically, as the heavy stillness of Śiva weighs on the soul, the rolling waves of *śakti* break upon the shoreline of the human mind.[136] The mark of the enlightened *yogi* is that he remains detached, or unaffected, by the qualities (*guṇas*) of reality as he is carried along by the streams of pulsations of the universal nature of consciousness.[137]

In the view of non-dual Śaiva tantra universal reality is a continuum, a revelation of the eternal nature of Śiva, which the *yogi* would acknowledge and recognize. Śiva is the self-existent reality, upon which is built the many-sided universe. The means of knowledge is given over to an ever-new generation of (colourful) light, which produces the reality of an object, but the knowing subject is always established, being 'uninterruptedly luminous'. The Lord, then, is 'like a 'smooth wall that is the substratum for the painting of the multiform universe'.[138] In his commentary on this verse, Abhinavagupta states: 'Thus, the author speaks of [the] ever lasting self-luminousness of the wall of light of consciousness for receiving the impress of all the various objects'.[139] The divine consciousness is an epistemological conjunction, that of the knower, knowledge, and the object of knowledge. The differentiation that normally obtains between these aspects is 'consumed' by the fire of recognitive apprehension, which is the shining Śakti.[140] Furthermore, as Virūpākṣa explains:

> I am without sequence. The knower, and so on [knowledge and the object of knowledge] are sequential. Consciousness is both sequential and non-sequential. The knower is like myself. Knowledge is like Śakti. The object of knowledge is like the triad [of the knower, knowledge, and the object of knowledge].[141]

This is seen for example in the sequentiality of colour perception, where a series of objectively specified phenomena such as blue (*nīla*) and yellow (*pīta*) are known by their exclusive appearances. However, even in this state of sequential awareness by the limited knower the nonsequential awareness of Śiva is to be found, for in reality the knower is the light and the knowledge is the colour; the alternation of conceptual construction, which is to say Śakti, is subsumed by the unity of exclusive awareness of Śiva.[142] For the *yogi* the nature of ultimate reality (*paramārtha*) is not that of transitory states of mind which are imbued with pleasure or pain, or yet the notion of subject and object, but rather the quintessential consciousness that is *Spanda*, the grounding sound-light that structures the universal reality.[143] As indicated earlier, a common motif is that Śiva has 'paramount sovereign freedom' in creating the universe; but although the pure reflective awareness he has of his own nature as 'I' (*aham*) is constant, he 'everywhere paints "this" (*idam*), the picture of the Three Worlds that scintillates with (the) endless unfolding of (its) diverse and wonderful manifestations (*avabhāsa*)'.[144] Śakti represents a wall of gauzy light between Śiva and the world, the appearance of which is only his diverse manifestation.[145] By analogy, the tantric practitioner, *sādhaka*, has the capacity to picture in his mind all that he desires and to project it creatively and objectively.[146] The *yogi* paints himself into the divine world through the brush-strokes of his cognitive faculties, by the deft working of his imagination and understanding.[147] In other words, divine consciousness is artfully realized by the free knower, and aesthetically recognized as the power of divinity.

The Prism of Divinity

Is it possible or worthwhile to draw a meaningful relationship between these conceptions—kabbalah and tantra—given the quite different cultural and social environments in which they were located? Is it possible to map correspondences directly between the divine figures in the kabbalistic and tantric systems? It would seem unlikely, which should not surprise us. Notwithstanding, I would venture to say that Śakti, as the energy of divinity, can be corresponded with Shekhinah, as the presence of divinity, the extent to which they are both a revelatory force of the hidden God that over time becomes understood as a distinctive or even separate (or separable) entity. The idea of Śakti and Shekhinah is characterized by a gradual reification, of an abstraction to a hypostatization.[148] In that respect, like *śakti*/Śakti, Shekhinah might be distinguished as *shekhinah*/Shekhinah—a flowing force and an abiding presence. The revelation is engendered, since both Śakti and Shekhinah are realized as feminine, as percieved through the prism of the mind. There is no doubt at least that *śakti*/Śakti represents a conceptually feminine understanding of reality.[149] Whereas in the Śaiva outlook, Śiva is the supreme principle of consciousness, with whom the (male) tantric must merge or identify, in the Śākta view, the power of consciousness, *cit-śakti*, is elevated to supreme status as the personified Śakti, with whom the (male or female) tantric must integrate.[150] It is thus especially in the Śākta tantras that the idea of the Goddess assumes primary importance, and their scriptures assign a pivotal role to Śakti as the supreme divinity, giving her autonomous status on the basis of her powering of reality, whereas Śiva is supine, and thus inconsequential (practically at any rate).[151] As the apprehensible appearance of God, Śakti is a divine refraction, who displays the spectrum of Brahman, and so reveals God as a female concept in the Śākta paradigm.[152] In kabbalistic terms, Shekhinah is intimately correlated with God, and is not to be regarded as autonomous, for to do so is to mark it as evil, as a servant of the 'other side' (*sitra aḥra*).[153] Yet, in some aspects of the kabbalah, Shekhinah is tantamount to being extolled as separate, and such a view is perhaps indicative of a basic need for a feminine component of the godhead.[154] If Shekhinah is the 'glory' of God, then in a similar vein Śakti is the 'glory' of Śiva. However, unlike the view of the Jewish medieval philosophers, Śakti cannot be considered as a created light, because she is an emanation; and so she would accord more with the ancient rabbinic and mystical ideas in which the *kavod* is uncreated. In short, she cannot be separated from the pervasive light that is Śiva, and lies in complete conformity with him.[155] Śakti otherwise describes an anthropomorphic realization of the nebulous divine light that appears in the intuition of the tantric, due to his soul being illuminated by Śiva. Where a distinction is made between Ein Sof (or Keter), and Ḥokhmah it is similar to the distinction sometimes made between Paramaśiva and Śiva.[156]

In rabbinic thought, God is revealed through his presentational self, known as Shekhinah, who is close to humanity, while in kabbalistic thought, God, as that which is without end (*ein sof*), is unrealizable except through the attributive nature of the *sefirot*.[157] More precisely, it is the sixth *sefirah*, Tiferet, who is considered to be God for all that humans can know, and who is identified with the 'Ineffable Name', that is, יהוה, YHVH (the Tetragrammaton).[158] He is only accessible through Malkhut (Shekhinah), the tenth *sefirah*, who is a liminal figure, one that is 'more imaginable than any other aspect of God'.[159] By way of comparison, in upaniṣadic thought, Brahman has a transcendental and immanental aspect, as *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa*, where the latter constitutes the attributive registration of a qualityless Absolute.[160] In tantric thought, Brahman, or more usually Anuttara ('Absolute') or Paramaśiva (Supreme Śiva), is unknowable except through its unified presentation of Śiva–Śakti.[161] The essence of this compounded divine is one of absolute freedom, and timelessness: it is beyond restricted

temporal concepts, which are embodied in activity.[162] In straightforward terms, Śiva and Tiferet are affectively and creatively represented in the mind, and *śakti–shekhinah* is the presentative power of that realization. As such, she aesthetically operates through sensibility and imagination, enabling the kabbalist and tantric to formulate a recognition of the Godhead. This means that Śakti–Shekhinah as the imaginative picture of Śiva–Tiferet is a graphic representation of divine reality on the canvas of the soul. It is an analysis that is open to a Kantian interpretation, through an analogical appeal.[163] Initially, let me suggest this: the kabbalist and tantric perceive God as an undetermined light in the soul through the spiritual senses, and this divine appearance is represented in the imagination (the faculty of intuitions), whereupon it is understood in accordance with concepts derived from the tradition, and thus cognized as the aspectual (experiential) forces of the *sefirot* and *tattva*s.[164] The light of God as given in the (pure) intuition through the mystical encounter is undetermined, or so to say, uncoordinated, whereas this light as it is gathered by the productive imagination and unified in the understanding is determined, or coordinated, and thus cognized as an object of apprehension.[165] The state of divinity is plotted on the map of the mind.[166] The realm of God, i.e., Śiva–Tiferet, is imaginatively discerned through the function of understanding (the faculty of concepts), which is the power of representation, Śakti–Shekhinah. In other words, the spontaneous realization of the intuited position of God, as apperceived in divine consciousness, is known through Śakti–Shekhinah.[167] In the (perduring) event of mystical consciousness, the cognition of the light of God is bounded by the categories of experience, which in this case are the qualitative relations found in the application of intelligence, power, understanding, will, etc. These categorical elements are ordered into the conceptual reality of the *sefirot* and *tattva*s by the power of judgement.[168] So, the mathematical light of God is drawn into an image and sketched in the imagination as the delineated form of the characteristics subsumed under the idea of *sefirot* and *tattva*s.

What grounds the sensible concept of the light of divine consciousness is, in Kant's terminology, a schema of the understanding, which is the rule for generalizing the particular iconic images attached to the unlimited appearance of God by the kabbalist and tantric in the context of their traditional beliefs.[169] It is through having a schematic understanding that the kabbalist and tantric can specify the shape of God, which is just the 'divine man'.[170] God cannot be thought except through the categories of attribution, the inclusive parameters of divine consciousness, which are represented in the *sefirot* and *tattva*s.[171] In addition, God is brought to consciousness through the capacity to judge the present character of Śakti–Shekhinah, who is the sensible object of spiritual experience. This is only to affirm that God, i.e., Śiva–Tiferet, is not able to be known in himself, but only as he appears to us in the guise of Śakti–Shekhinah. In Kantian terms, he is the *noumenon* and she is the *phenomenon* of the divine.[172] This is just to say that Śiva–Tiferet cannot be the object of a sensible intuition, but rather only its phenomenal appearance, Śakti–Shekhinah, can be the object of such an intuition; accordingly, this makes Śiva–Tiferet a noumenon in the negative sense, and so he is empty of meaning.[173] Or, Śiva–Tiferet might be the object of a non-sensible intuition, an intellectual intuition, which makes him a noumenon in the positive sense. At a higher level, it could be said that Anuttara and Ein Sof are not able to be known in themselves, but only as they are known through Śiva and Tiferet, which are the objects of a sensible intuition in the *spiritual senses* in the soul; this in turn would make Anuttara and Ein Sof noumena in a negative sense. If it were possible to say that Paramaśiva and Ein Sof could be the objects of a divine intellectual intuition in the soul, whatever that might mean, then they would be noumena in the positive sense.[174]

The question arises for both kabbalah and tantra of how a unitary Absolute can assume a diverse nature, and thereby admit of observationality.[175] The essence of God is surrounded by the *sefirot* and *tattvas*, which are the spheres and circles of divinity.[176] Metaphorically, the kabbalist and tantric are moving constantly on the boundary of God's being, and experience the centripetal force of divine consciousness, a directed awareness into the centre of life.[177] The absolute white light of God is imaginatively perceived as the variegated light, as the rainbow light, of divinity.[178] In divine terms, Paramaśiva is the white light of eternity that passes through a prismatic interface, which is called Śiva–Śakti, and the refracted light appears as the three-fold pure principles of Sadāśiva, Īśvara, and Śuddavidyā. Correspondingly, Ein Sof is the white light of forever that passes through the prismatic interface that is Ḥokhmah–Binah, and the refracted light appears as the sefirotic septet of Ḥesed, Gevurah, Tiferet, Netsaḥ, Hod, Yesod, and Shekhinah. In human terms, God is the white light that is refracted by the prism of Śakti–Shekhinah (as an objective entity) into the mind. To put it in contemporary terms, as the white light of God passes through a prismatic realm that is the becoming of the universe it is chromatically separated. So, actually, perceptual reality is a spectrum of colours; and the soteriological goal is to reintegrate the spectral hues and become identified as white light. It is to exhibit the complete fullness of divinity.[179] One could say that the purported blankness of Keter–Śiva is really an infinity of being of colourful light, which is realized through Shekhinah–Śakti as the bright knowledge of divine instantiation.[180] The singular divine light emanating from Ḥesed–Śiva is broken into perceptual recognition through the dispersive power of Shekhinah–Śakti.[181] In this way, the brilliance of God is knowingly refracted.[182] If Śakti–Shekhinah is the refractive interface, not just the refracted light, then it is fair to say that she is a crystallization of God's being as the divine body.[183] Correspondingly, if she is seated in the mind as the productive power of imagination then the human body is a crystallization of the soul. The cognitive faculties are fundamentally like a prism, which refract the white light of God into its constituent colours.[184]

An equally relevant metaphor is to say that the light of God is *diffracted* by the mind, for whereas ordinary consciousness represents an opaque barrier to the divine light, spiritual awareness means that there is an opening in the mind through which the divine light can pass. The realization of God's presence is represented by the interference fringes that appear on the screen of the understanding as the light of God moves through the diffraction grating of the imagination. This is the ruling of divinity.[185] Moreover, the lattice-work of divine consciousness is thus revealed by the crystalline mind of the kabbalist and tantric as it diffracts the X-rays of God.[186] As the kabbalistic and tantric mind is energized by Shekhinah–Śakti it produces a colourful line spectrum, which shows the chemical disposition of being as it selectively absorbs the sefirotic and tattvic elements of God.[187] Metaphorically, the human mind is a tessellated expanse between heaven and earth (spirit and body), which refracts the splendid light of Śakti–Shekhinah.[188] To recognize the power of divine presence, *śakti–shekhinah*, is to be placed under the waterfall of glory, and to see a mosaic image of sunlit rain.[189] The kabbalist and tantric have in common the urgent desire to be with God, which is a goal that is achievable because the natural world provides a conduit to the Godhead.[190] This world is not negated but is rather an expression of the divine. Both kabbalah and tantra systematically realize the wisdom of being with God, to become a gem in the house of divinity. Abhinavagupta, e.g., proclaims: 'What misfortune is there, and whose would it be, when he becomes the Great Lord at the very moment he realizes: "It is I [who am the Lord]?" There can be none on account of the collection that has been made of jewels of ultimate meaning, heaped up in the most secret treasure-room of the heart'.[191] Divinity is a state of transparency, of being able to take on different qualities, or hues, while remaining

essentially unchanged. One becomes unqualified in seeing through to God.[192] The prevailing analogy of the self as a jewel (*ratna*), or crystal (*sphaṭika*) is acknowledged by Śaiva commentators as being inadequate, on the basis that whereas these materials are insentient (*jaḍa*) the divine light is sentient (*ajaḍa*), being the model of consciousness.[193] In contemporary terms, however, this objection may not be valid, since one can refer to a 'photonic crystal'.[194]

Śiva–Ḥesed as the pinnacle of light is superradiant, and this means that its divine reflection, Śakti–Shekhinah, is likewise star-bright.[195] She is the mode of recognition of God's being, who delivers the knowledge that God is illuminating the world. There is also a maternal aspect to this realization of the divine. In the kabbalah, Shekhinah is reckoned as the mother of the physical world, while Binah is the mother of the divine world, the one who gives birth to the seven lower *sefirot*. As 'the full expression of ceaseless creative power', Binah is akin to 'the Shakti of the latent God', an 'entirely active energy, in which what is concealed within God is externalized'.[196] By contrast Shekhinah as a passive receptacle of divine energies is a sieve to the mundane world. She is a non-transparent mirror, one 'in which the abundant flow of divine light is broken and reflected; it is precisely this refraction that here becomes the Creation'.[197] According to Scholem, '[t]he *Shekhinah*, one might say, is not itself the force, but rather the means of transmitting the force or the field in which the force spreads'.[198] This, of course, does not correspond to *Śakti*, who is precisely a force; by analogy, an electric (or electrostatic) force, which acts in relation to spiritual and mundane reality.[199] If the universal Reality, as situated within God (since God pervades all), is an electric field that exerts a force on human beings, then the electric field vectors may be called *śakti–shekhinah*.[200] The kabbalist and tantric recognize that all life is a connected whole, as there is a constant interchange between the mundane and divine realities. It is a vital and secure connection.[201] The characteristic moment of being in the state of divinity is to be threaded through with blessed gracious consciousness.[202] As an arresting experience it gives pleasure to the kabbalist and tantric: it is beautiful without end, and complete unto itself. Now, in a Kantian sense, the satisfaction of this engagement is formal and material.[203] In the apprehension of divine nature it is the *form* of this representation that is 'beautiful', while it is the *content* of the representation that is 'enchanting'. Hence, the aesthetic judgement of God's nature is based on an abstract formality rather than on a sensible affect.

In the profound awareness of the exquisite light of divine consciousness the kabbalist and tantric are swept up into God's being, and it is an independent, 'disinterested' involvement, but when the blaze of energy is understood as the divine presence it becomes a dependent, or interested involvement.[204] The encounter with the light of God as it is represented in the soul (presented to the spiritual senses) sets into play, or 'animates', the powers of cognition, namely imagination and understanding, which gives the rule to the (super) nature of God.[205] In other words, the free harmony of this state is judged to be beautiful, and it is a feeling that is universally available to the confraternity of kabbalists and tantrics.[206] The freedom of human consciousness in reflecting on the beauty of God's light is in accord with the freedom of God's consciousness in reflecting on the beauty of his emanatory light. In their reflective condition, the mystical practitioners are drawing and outlining the figure of God, and colouring the divine qualities of benevolence, compassion, desire, etc. while they are being imbued with those sensations. If the realization of God's being by the kabbalist and tantric represents a beautiful appreciation, then it also represents a sublime appreciation.[207] As unlimited formlessness, Ein Sof and Paramaśiva are properly realized as sublime, being that which cannot be perceived in nature but only represented in the mind through the *sefirot* and *tattva*s; these conceptions are mathematically sublime the extent to which they represent a

graduation of the faculty of imagination reaching into the awesome infinite idea of God.[208] The universe is naturally a beautiful work of art produced by God in total freedom, and is moreover an exhibition of original talent, a spirit of genius.[209] As the microcosm of divine nature, the kabbalist and tantric likewise exhibit an artistic genius in rendering the beautiful world, judging it through a holy consciousness, which makes the mystical state of mind a perfectly beautiful representation of Śakti–Shekhinah.[210] In painting the word-picture of divinity through a spiritual genius, the kabbalist and tantric are presenting the aesthetic ideas of the *sefirot* and *tattva*s—those supersensible powers (or forces) that are hardly beyond the bounds of experience.[211] Encapsulated in this imaginative arrangement depicted in the soul are the aesthetic divine attributes, e.g., beauty, love, and wisdom, the contemplation of which ideally motivates the adept to surpass ordinary human understanding.[212] These qualities are precipitations of light-consciousness, the crystalline formations of God's being.[213] In recognizing the beautiful nature of artistic divine awareness the kabbalist and tantric are guided by a moral compass, which shows them the meridional way to God (Śiva–Tiferet) through the magisterial power of Divine Presence (Śakti–Shekhinah).[214]

In the schemes of kabbalah and tantra an appeal is made to worldly images in realizing a dynamic model for the nature of reality. Evident use is made of the notion of the sea and its wave action to indicate the divine calm and the mundane turmoil. In this respect, it may be said that the metaphysics of kabbalah and tantra equally demonstrate a tidal theology.[215] The waves connote the agitation of the mind, and the hurry of the senses, which are only surface effects.[216] For the practitioner, the goal is to traverse the vast ocean of experience, and to find the safe anchoring place of Shekhinah–Śakti in the world. It is a sea of light, and to be immersed in sweet communion with God is to drift upon the sempiternal current of languid divinity.[217] Negatively, in both systems—kabbalah and tantra—it seems the senses are deprecated, although in different ways: for the kabbalah they are transferred, and for the tantras they are to be quelled.[218] Yet, paradoxically perhaps, sexuality is validated: for the kabbalist, the waves of passion are aimed towards the end of arousing the Godhead; for the tantric, the waves of passion are to be inverted and subverted towards another end—namely the tensional crossover to God-consciousness.[219] In short, the senses are put at the service of (divine) intuition, and so they are to be transformed. Positively, the same thought patterns that are engaged in as part of the commerce of life are also the basis for reaching towards God. From a mathematical perspective the waves of cognition can be related to the electromagnetic pulse of consciousness, given as the amplitude and phase of mental activity. The kabbalist and tantric are in effect spiritualized oscillating electric and magnetic fields travelling through space and time. Moreover, this wave-like configuration means that they are radio-frequency transmitters whose signal is received by God.[220] Mystical consciousness is just a matter of tuning the mind, of modulating the frequency of thought. Both Shekhinah and Śakti are the functional expression of God's will, since they are the rays of light, and the productive effect of divine being. If Shekhinah is the radiative component of the divine Sun that is Ḥesed, then Śakti is equally the radiative component of the divine Sun that is Śiva. The perception of colour bestows a realization of God's presence, and colour after all is an electromagnetic phenomenon.[221] The kabbalist focuses on the three colours of Ḥesed (white), Gevurah (red), and Tiferet (green), taking them as comprising the rainbow.[222] It is notable that these colours do not quite correspond to the optical primary colours of blue, red, and green, from which all colours are composed and which together make up white. However, in the late middle ages, there was no recognition of the spectrum of colours.[223] Rather, it was thought, following Aristotle, that colors are generated by darkening white light.[224]

Both Shekhinah and Śakti are intimately correlated with God, and act as the entry-way to divinity and eternity, the ground of being.[225] They are the prismatic entry point for the soul's voyage into eternity; and by dispersing the pure light of God into the plane of reality, they symbolize the coloration of the absolute. It might be said that differential consciousness is like a wall, and it is necessary to take away the bricks—the mental constructs—in order to see behind the wholeness of Reality. If the rationalizing mind erects a barrier to recognizing God, then the force of insight provides the means for dismantling it.[226] To look at this in another, more positive way: the wall of Shekhinah–Śakti is the fixed end to which the metal coil of the mind is attached; when the energy of mystical consciousness is imparted to the coil it will vibrate with God. Divinity is a standing wave, and hence it is a musical realization.[227] As the façade of the house of God, Shekhinah–Śakti is the wall that upholds the sense of divine consciousness. She is a crystalline structure, which is represented in the mind's eye.[228] In artistic terms, Shekhinah and Śakti are the wall on which the kabbalist and tantric paint the circumstantial presence of God; that is to say, the abstract landscape of divinity is pictured on the fresco of the mind. In preparing to paint reality, the adept and master apply the wash of ritual to the mental wall of light-consciousness. If it is indeed the case that the mind colours reality, then it is like seeing through coloured sheets of cellophane; and so ultimately God is not seen as it truly is; even in mystical consciousness the divine is viewed through the translucent eye of the soul.[229] At the least, it can be said that the realization of Śiva–Tiferet is enwrapped in rainbow paper, making the presence of God, Shekhinah–Śakti, the gift of divinity. Or consider this: the golden light of God that streams into the soul makes visible the dust of the imagination, and shows the reward of understanding divine consciousness.[230]

Conclusion

In the preceding analysis I have explored the way in which the indefinite unitarity of God is realized as a definite plurality of divinity, through the prism of consciousness. This way of knowing is ordered under a gendered schema. A number of useful analogies exist between the theological roles of Shekhinah and Śakti, derived from the idea that they both function as a phenomenal power which shows the differential knowledge of the incomprehensible and unfathomable God in the world. According to rabbinic theology the transcendent God is made immanent through a presentative character, which is known as Shekhinah, and which is a luminous diffusion of divine being. For the kabbalists, the transcendent God is made immanent through an attributive complex, which is calculated as the *sefirot*—the manifest forces of the becoming light. The terminal culmination of this divine expression is Shekhinah, who is engendered as feminine. She is the outer limit of God, the fence-line of the divine kingdom, and the boundary marker for holiness. In the non-dual theologizing of Śaiva tantra the transcendent nature of God (Anuttara) is experientially made immanent by the feminine power of Śakti, who is the active working out into appearance of the undifferentiated pure consciousness typically recognized as the male god Śiva. The cosmic divine light is funnelled by Śakti–Shekhinah, and benignly shed upon human awareness; it is she who enables the dark ground of being to be illuminated. The realm of divinity is discerned through the cognitive faculties, by the powers of imagination and understanding, working in tandem, as they are energetically motivated by Śakti–Shekhinah. In the refractory workings of the mind the presence of God is realized as surpassingly beautiful and sublime. It is a phenomenal recognition of a noumenal reality. We are allowed only a fragmented awareness of the infinite nature of God, for our mind is merely a pane in the stained glass of reality.

Notes

1. In this essay I am limited to a consideration of those materials that are available in English, which means that my analysis can only be suggestive and tentative. I am grateful to John Dupuche, David Lawrence, and Nathan Wolski for their valuable comments or observations on an earlier version of this paper.
2. These verses are, respectively: '"But," He said, "you cannot see My face, for man may not see Me and live." / And the LORD said, "See, there is a place near Me. Station yourself on the rock / and, as My Presence passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock and shield you with My hand until I have passed by. / Then I will take My hand away and you will see My back; but My face must not be seen."' And, 'With him [i.e., Moses] I speak mouth to mouth, plainly and not in riddles, and he beholds the likeness of the LORD. How then did you not shrink from speaking against My servant Moses!'. Unless otherwise noted, for biblical references I shall refer to the Jewish Publication Society's *TANAKH* translation, in *The Jewish Study Bible*, ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). I shall conventionally use the masculine pronoun when referring to the Jewish God.
3. The philosophical formulation of the incomprehensibility and unknowability of God is owed to Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 BCE–50 CE), who took the scriptural doctrine that God is unlike other beings and transformed it into the notion of incorporeality (H.A. Wolfson, 'The Unknowability of God and Divine Predicates', in *Philo: The Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1947], Vol. 2, pp. 94–164).
4. These learned men were the expounders of Torah who flourished in the early centuries of the Common Era. See Shmuel Safrai, ed., *The Literature of the Sages*. First Part: Oral Tora, Halakha, Mishna, Tosefta, Talmud, External Tractates. Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).
5. Peter Schäfer, *Mirror of His Beauty: Feminine Images of God from the Bible to the Early Kabbalah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 86. He elaborates on the Shekhinah in rabbinic thought at 86–102. See also Gershom Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in Kabbalah*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel; ed. and rev. Jonathan Chipman (New York: Schocken Books, 1991), pp. 147–54.
6. Joseph Abelson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1912), pp. 82–89. As the Talmud puts it, 'there is no place on earth devoid of the *Shekhinah*' (*Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:4; cited by Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts*, trans. David Goldstein [Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1989], p. 255, n. 62).
7. Schäfer, *Mirror of His Beauty*, op. cit. (note 5), p. 91; Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, trans. Ralph Manheim (1965; repr., New York: Schocken Books 1996), pp. 104–5; idem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, trans. Alan Arkush, ed. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 163.
8. Schäfer, *Mirror of His Beauty*, op. cit. (note 5), p. 102; cf. Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 165–66. Scholem stresses that in his view, and contra Abelson's thesis, the Shekhinah is not in this period a hypostatic intermediary (ibid., n. 167).
9. See Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 74–124; and Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), pp. 40–79. The composition and provenance of this literature is uncertain, but it is likely that it was mainly redacted in Babylonia in the early to middle period of the first millennium, although the extant manuscripts only date from the late Middle Ages (Wolfson, ibid., 74–81).
10. Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape*, op. cit. (note 5), p. 21; idem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 139–40. This adventure was invariably a male endeavour.
11. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, op. cit. (note 9), pp. 88 and 107.
12. Ibid., pp. 91–95. See also Moshe Halbertal, *Concealment and Revelation: Esotericism in Jewish Thought and its Philosophical Implications*, trans. Jackie Feldman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 18–27. He affirms that the vision of the chariot involves 'know[ing] how to peek with a cautious, fleeting glance', and as such it is a 'visual trespass' upon the sublimity of God (ibid., p. 14).
13. Schäfer, *Mirror of His Beauty*, op. cit. (note 5), pp. 103–17. For a detailed analysis see Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, op. cit. (note 9), pp. 125–87. The renowned philosopher Moses Maimonides (1137/38–1204) steadfastly promoted the idea of the incorporeality of God (Herbert A. Davidson, *Moses Maimonides: The Man and His Works* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], pp. 238–41). The aforementioned biblical verses read as follows: 'But [Micaiah] said, "I call upon you to hear the word of the LORD! I saw the LORD seated upon His throne, with all the host of heaven standing in attendance to the right and to the left of Him' (1 Kings 22:19); 'Above the expanse over their heads was the semblance of a throne, in

appearance like sapphire; and on top, upon this semblance of a throne, there was the semblance of a human form' (Ezekiel 1:26); 'As I looked on, Thrones were set in place, / And the Ancient of Days took His seat. / His garment was like white snow, / And the hair of His head was like lamb's wool. / His throne was tongues of flame; / Its wheels were blazing fire' (Daniel 7:9).

14. See Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, op. cit. (note 9), pp. 126–27 (with quote at p. 127); also, Scholem, *Major Trends*, op. cit. (note 9), pp. 111–12.
15. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, pp. 149–150; see also Schäfer, *Mirror of His Beauty*, op. cit. (note 5), p. 109.
16. Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 125; Schäfer, *Mirror of His Beauty*, p. 117; Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape*, op. cit. (note 5), pp. 155–56.
17. On this religious movement see Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem: Keter; New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Book Co., 1974), pp. 35–42; idem, *Major Trends*, op. cit. (note 9), pp. 80–118; Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, op. cit. (note 9), pp. 188–269.
18. David Ariel, *Kabbalah: The Mystic Quest in Judaism* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), p. 33; cf. Scholem, *Major Trends*, op. cit. (note 9), pp. 115–16.
19. On this expository tradition see Shmuel Safrai, 'Oral Tora', in *Literature of the Sages*, op. cit. (note 4), pp. 35–119. The first known kabbalistic work is the *Sefer ha-Bahir* (*Book of Clear Light*), which was edited in Provence in the twelfth century, and which was attributed to the second century sage Rabbi Neḥunyah ben ha-Kanah (see Ariel, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. [note 18], p. 37; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. [note 17], pp. 42–48, 312–16; and idem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, op. cit. [note 7], pp. 39–41, where he goes on to provide a detailed consideration of the Bahir's character at 49–198). I have consulted the translation by Aryeh Kaplan, *The Bahir* (York Beach, ME: Red Wheel/Weiser, 1979). Following this, the monumental *Sefer ha-Zohar* (*The Book of Splendour*) was written in the late thirteenth century in Castile by Moses de León (ca. 1240–1305), or otherwise collectively by a circle of mystics (it is traditionally attributed to the second century Palestinian teacher and mystic Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai). This remarkable work is considered to be the premier text of kabbalah. See the important discussion by Scholem in *Major Trends*, op. cit. (note 9), pp. 156–204, and also Tishby's valuable General Introduction in his *Wisdom of the Zohar*, op. cit. (note 6), pp. 1–126. I have consulted the critical edition of the main commentary on the Torah translated and glossed by Daniel C. Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004–16).
20. Ariel, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 18), pp. 14–15, 59; Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape*, op. cit. (note 5), p. 159. As a comparison, if Śiva, who is male, is elevated to the level of Supreme Lord (Paramaśiva), which is to say ultimate divinity, is he put beyond his gender? Interestingly, one commentator has remarked that even though he refers to Paramaśiva in the masculine he admits that 'in reality it is neither He, She nor It, and may be equally referred to by any or all of these terms' (J.C. Chatterji, *Kashmir Shaivism* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986], p. 2).
21. On especially the theosophic doctrine of the *sefirot* see Moshe Hallamish, *An Introduction to the Kabbalah*, trans. Ruth Bar-Ilan and Ora Wiskind-Elper (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 121–66; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 17), pp. 96–116; idem, *Major Trends*, op. cit. (note 9), pp. 207–25. These aspects of God (Ein Sof) are given as Keter (Crown), Ḥokhmah (Wisdom), Binah (Understanding), Ḥesed (Love), Gevurah (Power), Tiferet (Beauty), Netsaḥ (Endurance), Hod (Splendour), Yesod (Foundation), and Malkhut (Kingdom or Sovereignty). The term 'sefirot' first appears in the third- to sixth-century text *Sefer Yeṣirah* (*Book of Creation*) (Ariel, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. [note 18], p. 66; Hallamish, *Introduction to the Kabbalah*, op. cit., p. 126; Scholem, *Major Trends*, op. cit. [note 9], p. 206). This decadal scheme may derive from the Babylonian teacher Rav (175–247 CE), who said that the world was created by ten qualities, namely 'wisdom, insight, knowledge, force, appeal, power, justice, right, love and compassion' (Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 74; idem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, op. cit. [note 7], p. 82).
22. Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, op. cit. (note 6), p. 269. See also Scholem, *Major Trends*, op. cit. (note 9), pp. 213–16. Tishby writes that the *Zohar* does not actually employ the term *sefirot* (except in the later sections), but rather uses a litany of names (ibid.).
23. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 100–1.
24. See Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 146–53. The writings of Abraham Abulafia (1240–91), who is the major exponent of the school of thought known as 'ecstatic kabbalah', demonstrate an 'anthropocentric understanding of the *sefirot* as psychological states contained in the human being' (Elliot R. Wolfson, *Abraham Abulafia – Kabbalist and Prophet: Hermeneutics, Theosophy, and Theurgy* [Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2000], p. 145).
25. Ariel, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 18), p. 66; Hallamish, *Introduction to the Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 21), p. 126; Daniel C. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism* (San Francisco:

HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), p. 17; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 17), pp. 99–100; Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, op. cit. (note 9), p. 273.

26. *Zohar* 1:245a. Matt glosses here: '[i]nstead of the reading בדולחא (*bedulḥa*), "bdellium, crystal" . . . many witnesses read כרמלא (*karmela*), "Carmel"….' (Vol. 3, p. 501, n. 896).
27. See ibid., and Matt's gloss at note 895 explaining his interpretation.
28. On this attribution in the *Bahir* see Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 162–180. In its interpretation of Job 28:27–28, whereby God declared the wisdom of Torah, the zoharic author turns the assonance of ויספרה *sapperah* (declare) with סַפִּיר *sappir* (sapphire) into the idea of God rendering wisdom sapphirine (see *Zohar* 1:199a, and Matt's gloss at Vol. 3, p. 221, n. 255). Elsewhere, it is said that the declared love of Shekhinah and Tiferet (the bride and bridegroom) is a sparkling radiance of sapphire glory (1:8a; Vol. 1, p. 53). On this point see Melila Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden: The Language of Mystical Experience in the Zohar*, trans. Nathan Wolski (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 193.
29. *Zohar* 1:199a (Vol. 3, p. 221), citing Job 28:6, apropos Wisdom: 'Its rocks are a source of sapphires; It contains gold dust too'.
30. Hallamish, *Introduction to the Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 21), pp. 137, 139, 224, 269; Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, op. cit. (note 16), pp. 25–30, 106, 140, 150; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 17), pp. 43, 122; idem, *On the Mystical Shape*, op. cit. (note 5), pp. 145–6, and 256 n. 24.
31. *On the Mystical Shape*, op. cit. (note 5), p. 169.
32. For the idea of spiritual light garnered in various religious traditions see Matthew T. Kapstein, ed., *The Presence of Light: Divine Radiance and Religious Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). According to Bernard McGinn, it was Augustine, Dionysius, and John Scottus Eriugena who founded the tradition of *Lichtmetaphysik*, 'the metaphysics of light', at least in the Christian tradition (*The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the 12th Century* [New York: Crossroad, 1994], p. 102).
33. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. 'Insight') records an obsolete usage of: 'Internal sight, mental vision or perception, discernment; in early use sometimes, Understanding, intelligence, wisdom', which is apt for my purpose. Further references to the *OED* are to the 2nd edition.
34. According to the *Zohar*, it is in the watery light of morning that the grace of God (YHVH) is consumed 'לעדי עד (*la-adei ad*), forever and ever' (1:247b; and Matt glosses that '[t]he phrase עדי עד (*adei ad*), *forever and ever*, is apparently taken as referring to *Tif'eret* and the *sefirot* surrounding Him extending up to, but not including, *Binah*' [Vol. 3, p. 521, n. 954]; the *sefirah* Ḥesed is symbolized by water and grace). God is gloriously revealed as Love (Ḥesed) on the summit of Mt Sinai in the morning, when the clouds of judgement (Din) have dissipated (see Zohar 2:81a; and Matt's gloss at Vol. 4, p. 440, n. 263). On the importance of the time of dawn in zoharic understanding, see Hellner-Eshed, *River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. (note 28), pp. 265–68. Eitan P. Fishbane essays the profound hermeneutic realization of the dawn space for Isaac ben Samuel of Akko (late 13th–mid-14th century), where for example the liminal state of *nim ve-lo nim*, 'the condition of being asleep but not asleep', allows insight into the incomprehensible, which is the penetrative emergence into wisdom, 'seeing the secret' (*As Light Before Dawn: The Inner World of a Medieval Kabbalist* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009], pp. 103–14).
35. The 'divine world' may be understood as a 'supernatural' realm or as a 'divine perspective' upon the natural world.
36. The conjunction of Tiferet and Shekhinah engenders a mutual highlighting. As the sun of Tiferet illumines the moon of Shekhinah, and he couples with her (after sunset), 'He glows, illumined, shining forth from the supernal site abiding above Him, whence He shines constantly' (*Zohar* 1:136a; and see Matt's glosses at Vol. 2, p. 262, nn. 34–36). Given that Binah is the 'supernal site', this implies symbolically that she is the spiritual sun, who energizes the nuclear core of the physical sun—an allusion that is applicable to Śakti (see below, note 195).
37. Shekhinah is the divine presence who attends to Israel even when her people are in exile from the land, for she is like the radiance of the sun, whose 'power and energy prevail throughout earth' (*Zohar* 1:159b; Vol. 2, p. 390).
38. The term Impressionist is applied especially to a group of French painters working in the later 1860s to mid-1880s who 'demonstrate an attention to momentary effects of light, atmosphere or movement. The paintings are . . . executed in a palette of pure, intense colours, with juxtaposed brushstrokes making up a field without conventional perspectival space or hierachies of forms…. [They] shared a concern for finding a technical means to express individual sensation' (Grace Seiberling, in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner [New York: Macmillan, 1996], Vol. 15, p. 151). The symbolism of colours is an important element in kabbalistic ideas, as shown in the *Zohar* and the Safedian kabbalist Moses

Cordovero (1522–70). For example, in gazing at God the kabbalist is saved, and he may assume the robe of righteousness, adorned with the sefirotic colours (*Zohar* 2:90b; Vol. 4, p. 517). Matt glosses: 'Rabbi Yehudah associates the word ישע (*yesha*), *salvation*, with the verb שעה (*sh'h*), "to gaze at, look at". The sefirotic colors of *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah* decorate *Tif'eret*, upon whom one is invited to gaze. *Tif'eret* is also known as צדקה (*tsedaqah*), *righteousness*. Israel declares that God has clothed and wrapped them in sefirotic colors' (ibid., n. 548).

39. See Idel, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 24), pp. 103–11. See furthermore the observations by Gershom Scholem in his two-part paper, 'Colours and their Symbolism in Jewish Tradition and Mysticism', *Diogenes* 27 (December 1979): 84–111, esp. 100–11, and 28 (March 1980): 64–76.
40. Interestingly, in a study on the history of star formation in the universe based on the 'cosmic spectrum', astronomers have noted that the energy emitted at different wavelengths can be corresponded with the approximate colour that the human eye would see at those wavelengths; and so for the present day, the colour of the (local) universe would appear a pale yellow, or orange, or blue-green, with respect to various reference white points (see Ivan K. Baldry, et al., 'The 2dF Galaxy Redshift Survey: Constraints on Cosmic Star Formation History from the Cosmic Spectrum', *The Astrophysical Journal* 569, no. 2 [April 20, 2002]: 582–94 at 569, n. 16; and Karl Glazebrook & Ivan Baldry, 'The Cosmic Spectrum and the Color of the universe', at http://www.pha.jhu.edu/~kgb/cosspec/). If the kabbalist would see God, it is through the fawny light of Shekhinah. I am alluding to the fact that Shekhinah is symbolized as a Doe (*Zohar* 2:7b; and Matt notes that she 'is identified with the *doe of love* (Proverbs 5:19) and *the doe of dawn* (Psalms 22:1)' [Vol. 4, p. 25, n. 99]). A fawn is a young fallow deer.
41. See *Zohar* 1:18a–b, Vol. 1, pp. 139–40; 1:71b, ibid., pp. 421–23.
42. *Zohar* 1:232a; and Matt's gloss at Vol. 3, p. 403, n. 501.
43. The Companions of the kabbalah are abjured: 'Who among you possesses eyes of discernment to perceive?' Furthermore: 'When it arose in the will of Secret of Secrets [*Keter*, Will] to emit three colors blended as one—white, red, and green—three colors as one commingled, trickling into one another. A spade below was painted, issuing from these colors. By this all colors are refracted—a vision to gaze upon, like the appearance of crystal: as a color penetrates, so it appears outwardly' (1:232a; and see Matt's glosses here, Vol. 3, p. 404, nn. 505 and 506). At a spiritualized level, the kabbalist is able to see the unknown colours of God. In cognitive science, it has been theorized that human observers are not capable of seeing colour combinations such as bluish yellow or reddish green, i.e., the existence of blue and yellow, or red and green, simultaneously in the visual field, since activity in the retina and mid-brain precludes mixtures of these 'opponent' colours. Such colour combinations are considered to be unimaginable or 'forbidden'. However, various experiments have shown that under certain conditions it is psycho-physically possible to do so, and subjects report these colours as indepictable and indescribable. See Vincent A. Billock and Brian H. Tsou, 'Seeing Forbidden Colors', *Scientific American* 302, no. 2 (2010): 72–77; and Hewitt D. Crane and Thomas P. Piantanida, 'On Seeing Reddish Green and Yellowish Blue', *Science* 221 (September 9, 1983): 1078–80. Cf below, note 102.
44. See Hallamish, *Introduction to the Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 21), pp. 80, 138, 145–46.
45. 1:51b–52a (Vol. 1, pp. 286–88); 2:228b–229a (Vol. 6, pp. 312–14).
46. Ariel, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 18), p. 37. Tishby similarly writes that the *sefirot* are 'dynamic forces, ascending and descending, and extending themselves within the area of the Godhead…. They are in continuous motion, involved in innumerable processes of interweaving, interlinking, and union' (*Wisdom of the Zohar*, op. cit. [note 6], p. 272).
47. Rabbi El'azar expounds that YHVH is the supernal voice that is 'appointed over *the waters* flowing from rung to rung until they gather at one site, in one throng. That supernal *voice* conducts the *waters* in their courses, each in its own way, like a gardener appointed over water to conduct it to each site fittingly' (*Zohar* 1:31a; Vol. 1, p. 188). Hellner-Eshed writes in this regard: 'In numerous places throughout the Zohar, *mayyim rabbim* (the mighty waters) is interpreted as the hidden depths of divinity, and the prayer of the "faithful one" is precisely to experience the rushing of divinity flowing from the depths' (*River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. [note 28], p. 419, n. 67).
48. This image forms a rich metaphor for the mystical experience that is set out in the *Zohar* (see the superb analysis by Hellner-Eshed, *River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. [note 28]).
49. *Zohar* 1:63a, and Matt's gloss at Vol. 1, p. 367, n. 183, where he cites this saying from BT *Sanhedrin* 94b. The *mitsvot* are the commandments of God.
50. *Zohar* 1:63a, and Matt's gloss at Vol. 1, p. 367, n. 184.
51. *Zohar* 1:86a; Vol. 2, p. 49.
52. *Zohar* 1:74a–b; Vol. 1, pp. 440–41. Matt glosses that '[t]hough it appears that the split begins at the stage of *Shekhinah*, Rabbi Shim'on explains that it takes effect only beneath Her, as a result of the journey away from *the garden*' (ibid., n. 750). Elsewhere, Rabbi El'azar states that '[t]his supernal array is

entirely one, containing no division like that lower one—for it is written: *from there it divides* (Genesis 2:10). Yet although it contains division, upon contemplating, all ascends to one' (1:241a; Matt glosses that El'azar is referring to the sefirotic array of Binah through to Shekhinah: 'Their unity contrasts with the realm beneath *Shekhinah*, which is characterized by multiplicity'; moreover, 'through contemplation, one discovers that this multiplicity is merely apparent' [Vol. 3, pp. 472–73, n. 791]). Genesis 11:1–9 recounts that the human population in Babylon built a city with a high tower as demonstration of their technological capacity, but at the cost of reverence for God, who consequently confounded human speech so they could not understand one another, 'and scattered them from there over the face of the whole earth'.

53. *Zohar* 1:69b. Matt glosses that the ray here refers to '[a] ray of divine grace' (Vol. 1, p. 408, n. 499).
54. The ships symbolize the angelic potencies within Shekhinah, and the fish symbolize the angels that are appointed over human affairs (2:48b; with Matt's gloss at Vol. 4, p. 235, n. 132).
55. Lilith is the mythical first wife of Adam, made from the earth, who quarrelled with God over her status and took flight into a demonic career (Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, op cit. [note 7], p. 163). She flees to 'the cities of the sea, still intent on harming inhabitants of the world', and to forestall her intervention a man in coupling with his wife should focus on the Lord and say: 'One wrapped in a bedspread is looming. Loosened, loosened! Enter not, emerge not; not yours, not your portion! Return, return; the sea rages, its rolling waves calling you! I grasp the holy share, I am wrapped in holiness of the King' (*Zohar* 3:19a; Vol. 7, pp. 119–20).
56. As the *Bahir* states: 'The Sea is nothing other than the Torah, as it is written (*Job 11:9*), "It is wider than the sea"' (§3; Kaplan, *Bahir*, op. cit. [note 19], p. 2). In the section of the *Zohar* entitled *Sava de-Mishpatim*, 'Old Man of [Torah portion] *Mishpatim* (Laws)', a seafaring metaphor is used to illustrate the 'profound and dangerous depths of meaning' that await the exegetical explorer (see Matt's gloss at Vol. 5, p. 29, n. 84, with references).
57. The zoharic author, after adducing the proverbial saying that wisdom is more precious than rubies (Proverbs 3:15 and 8:11), avers: 'For Torah is completely filled with all precious stones and priceless pearls, with all the world's treasures' (*Zohar* 1:163a; Vol. 2, pp. 410–11).
58. Hellner-Eshed uses this felicitous term in describing the particular kind of mystical experiential journey embarked upon by the kabbalists (see *River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. [note 28], pp. 309–39). In this regard she explains that 'a crucial consideration in the choice of this model is the wave's dynamism: the calm surface, the slow rising of the wave, the peak, and then the subsequent calm, all in continuous movement. However, just as the ocean contains eddies, rips, and ripples that alter the general wave pattern, so the mystical wave in the Zohar appears with an array of qualities within the ocean of the Companions' consciousness' (310).
59. Scholem writes that '[i]n all kabbalistic systems, light-symbolism is very commonly used with regard to *Ein-Sof*, although it is emphasized that this use is merely hyperbolical, and in later Kabbalah a clear distinction was sometimes made between *Ein Sof* and "the light of *Ein-Sof*"' (*Kabbalah*, op. cit. [note 17], p. 90).
60. *Ketem Paz*, 1:124c; cited by Matt, *Essential Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 25), p. 91.
61. Ariel, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 18), p. 69; Hallamish, *Introduction to the Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 21), p. 164.
62. Zohar 2:23a; and Matt's gloss at Vol. 4, p. 80, n. 36. He notes here that the translated term crystal 'renders עשישתא (*ashishta*), "bar of metal, glass, glass lantern"'.
63. *Zohar* 1:128b, Vol. 2, p. 224; cf. 2:63b, Vol. 4, p. 343.
64. Ariel, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 18), p. 99.
65. Elliot R. Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), p. 153.
66. The zoharic author refers to Shekhinah as the 'secret of wall', against whom Hezekiah set his face when praying with intent (see *Zohar* 1:228b, with Matt's gloss at Vol. 3, p. 377, n. 388; 2:133a, with Matt's gloss at Vol. 5, p. 235, n. 125; and, 3:260b, with Matt's gloss at Vol. 9, p. 663, n. 15).
67. *Zohar* 1:232b; Vol. 3, pp. 404–5. The exception, the zoharic author reminds us, was Moses, that 'supernal faithful prophet who saw eye to eye above in a place unknown' (ibid., p. 405). Elsewhere, Rabbi Shimon explains that whereas the faithful at Mount Sinai saw God (exemplified as the divine voices of the Torah) 'as one sees light in a glass lantern', symbolizing Shekhinah, Ezekiel saw her and the accompanying angels, 'but nothing more, and he saw like someone looking from behind many walls' (*Zohar* 2:82a; Matt glosses that the phrase 'glass lantern' translates עשישתא (*ashishta*) [Vol. 4, p. 451, n. 306). See above, note 62.
68. According to the rabbinic sages, the act of praying unifies God and his Shekhinah, and so 'nothing should come between him and the wall which is next to him' (Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, op. cit. [note

6], p. 958; and he notes that the text plays on the word *shakhen*, which means 'near to, adjoining' [p. 1002, n. 129]).

69. For a brief survey of *brahman* see Hervey deWitt Griswold, *Brahman: A Study in the History of Indian Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1900). He adopted a Kantian approach. Griswold (1860–1944) was Professor of Philosophy in the Forman Christian College, Lahore, and a Missionary of the American Presbyterian Church.
70. For an historical analysis of Śakti see S.K. Das, *Śakti or Divine Power: A Historical Study Based on Original Sanskrit Texts* (1934; repr., Kolkata: Sadesh, 2003). In this paper, when I use the unqualified term tantra I have in mind the kind of metaphysical speculations advanced in Kashmir Śaivism, so called, which developed in the seminal period of the 9th to 11th centuries, and which subsequently influenced South Indian Śāktism.
71. Rajmani Tigunait, *Śakti: The Power in Tantra, A Scholarly Approach* (Honesdale, PA: The Himalayan Institute Press, 1998), p. 5. The Ṛg Veda is a collection in ten books of hymns to various deities, which were composed in Vedic Sanskrit around the turn of the first millennium before the Common Era (Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], p. 37).
72. Gerald James Larson, 'The Sources for *Śakti* in Abhinavagupta's Kāśmir Śaivism: A Linguistic and Aesthetic Category', *Philosophy East and West* 24, no. 1 (1974): 41–56 at 46–47.
73. Tigunait, *Śakti*, op. cit. (note 71), pp. 7–13. The philosophical schools developed during the first millennium of the Common Era, and form part of the 'six (orthodox or Hindu) *darśanas*', or conceptions of the world (see Flood, *Introduction to Hinduism*, op. cit. [note 71], pp. 231–32, 236–46; and Friedhelm Hardy, 'Hindu Philosophies and Theologies', in *The World's Religions*, ed. Stewart Sutherland et al. [London: Routledge, 1988], pp. 637–45). The Purāṇas are ancient narratives based on oral traditions that deal with cosmological and mythological issues. They are difficult to date, but were probably first put to writing during the reign of the Guptas (ca. 320–ca. 500 CE) (Flood, ibid., 109–11; see furthermore, Friedhelm Hardy, 'Epic and Purāṇic Religion', in *World's Religions*, pp. 604–10).
74. See Thomas B. Coburn, *Encountering the Goddess: A Translation of the Devī-Māhātmya and a Study of its Interpretation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).
75. See C. MacKenzie Brown, *The Devī Gītā; The Song of the Goddess: A Translation, Annotation, and Commentary* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998). This work can be dated to the period between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries (ibid., p. 4).
76. I do not mean to imply that this distinction is ontological, but rather that it is epistemological, in the sense of understanding the activity of God and its relationship to human beings. I refer to Śakti as a psychological category in so far as the qualities ascribed to the divine feminine are constructed and projected by male writers. The role of Śakti is also psychological in that she embodies the *mantras*, which are cryptic formulas enunciated by *yogis* to attain the state of divine grace.
77. For a helpful elucidation of this important school of thought see David Peter Lawrence, *Rediscovering God with Transcendental Argument: A Contemporary Interpretation of Monistic Kashmiri Śaiva Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 35–65, 85–106. Somānanda (fl. ca. 900–50) and Utpaladeva (fl. ca. 925–75) are the central teachers here. Abhinavagupta (fl. ca. 975–1025) stands in this lineage, and he famously synthesized the range of teachings in the Kaula–Trika tradition in his *magnum opus*, the *Tantrāloka* (*Light on the Tantras*), followed by his pupil Kṣemarāja (fl. ca. 1000–50). Jayaratha (fl. ca. 1225–75) wrote an extensive commentary (*viveka*), on the *Tantrāloka* (henceforth abbrev. TĀ). Neither the text itself nor the commentary has yet been wholly translated into English. Lawrence remarks elsewhere that this major school of Kashmir Śaivism is distinguished by its psychological approach, which 'empower[s] and diviniz[es] the human ego and body' (*The Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One: A Study and Translation of the* Virūpākṣapañcāśikā *with the Commentary of Vidyācakravartin* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008], p. 3). See further below, note 107.
78. See Mark S.G. Dyczkowski, *The Doctrine of Vibration: An Analysis of the Doctrines of and Practices of Kashmir Shaivism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987). The paramount figures here are Vasugupta, who was contemporaneous with Somānanda, and his disciple Kallaṭa. Kṣemarāja also drew extensively on this School's scriptures.
79. While the translation of *cit/saṃvid* as 'consciousness' is the usual one it is not unproblematic, according to Ernst Fürlinger, who argues that it betrays a Eurocentric understanding, inasmuch as it emphasizes 'the individual human consciousness associated with "subjectivity", "self-awareness", "reason", and "thinking"'. However, *cit* (masc.) 'is not limited to the human realm. In the "world-experience" of Trika, *citi* [fem.] is the "Goddess" *herself*, Śakti, the flashing, shining, pulsating, blissful, conscious source and core of reality as a whole' (see *The Touch of Śakti: A Study in Non-dualistic Trika Śaivism of Kashmir* [New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2009], p. 50).

80. As Raffaele Torella notes, the term *prakāśa* has a 'density of meaning . . . (light, manifestation, presence to consciousness and therefore also coming to light, perception, knowledge etc.)' (in *The Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā Utpaladeva with the Author's Vṛtti. Critical Edition and Annotated Translation* [Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1994], p. 151, n. 16). Subsequent citations to this text are given as ĪPK, with section, chapter, and verse, plus page number to this edition.
81. Abhinavagupta writes in his *Mālinīślokavāttika*: 'He, who is without limitations and undivided, causes the manifestation of limitations as different [from him]' (1.203cd); and, 'That which is undivided is imperceptible' (1.207cd) (in Jurgen Hanneder, *Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Revelation: An Edition and Annotated Translation of* Mālinīślokavārttika I, *1–399* [Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998], p. 93). The *Mālinīvijayavārttika* (or *Mālinīślokavārttika*) 'is an exegesis of the beginning of the *Mālinīvijayottara-tantra* or *Pūrvaśāstra* (Primal Teaching), which Abhinavagupta views as the "essence of the Trika scriptures"' (Fürlinger, *Touch of Śakti*, op. cit. [note 79], p. 12, citing TĀ 1.18).
82. *Mālinīślokavārttika* 1.133ab (in Hanneder, *Abhinavagupta's Philosophy*, op. cit. [note 81], p. 81).
83. See *Vijñānabhairava*, verses 109, 130, 132 (in *The Yoga of Delight, Wonder, and Astonishment. A Translation of the Vijñāna-bhairava with an Introduction and Notes*, Jaideva Singh [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991], pp. 98, 118, 121–22). On the omnipresent light-consciousness of Śiva see Harvey P. Alper, 'Śiva and the Ubiquity of Consciousness: The Spaciousness of an Artful Yogi', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 7 (1979): 345–407.
84. In the teachings of *Spanda* the act of perception involves a two-stage process, that of presentation (*prakāśa*), which 'takes place the instant an object is perceived and its existence as such (*sattāmātra*) is registered', and that of representation (*vimarśa*), 'in which the object is identified and, emerging out of its indeterminancy, is made clearly manifest' (*The Stanzas on Vibration: The Spandakārikā with Four Commentaries. Translated with an Introduction and Exposition*, Mark S.G. Dyczkowski [Varanasi: Dilip Kumar Publishers, 1994], p. 349, n. 89). By the term 'spiritual senses' I understand the reciprocal relation of the physical senses, at a more refined level.
85. ĪPK 1.5.11; p. 118. Utpaladeva states: 'The essential nature of light is reflective awareness (*vimarśam*); otherwise light, though "coloured" by objects, would be similar to an insentient reality, such as crystal and so on'. In his auto-commentary (*vṛtti*) he explains that without the critical factor of reflective awareness light 'would merely be "limpid", [and] not sentient, since there is no "savouring" (*camatkṛteḥ*)' (ibid.). In that case, it would merely be like a crystal, which though it is capable of reflecting the light that falls upon it, lacks self-awareness. In his interpretation of this *kārikā* (i.e., verse) Abhinavagupta extends the notion of reflecting objects to water and mirrors (*Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vimarśinī of Abhinavagupta: Doctrine of Divine Recognition*, trans. K.C. Pandey [1954; repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986], p. 70). This text is hereafter abbreviated as ĪPV, with section, chapter, and verse, plus page number to this edition.
86. André Padoux, *Vāc, the Concept of the Word in Selected Hindu Scriptures* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 364. He writes that Abhinavagupta derives 'the word *tattva* from the root *TAN*, to spread', and moreover, Kṣemarāja, in his commentary on the *Svacchandatantra*, 'explains *tattva* as that which spreads (*tananāt tattvam*), that is, which brings forth the manifestation' (ibid., p. 365; see also Fürlinger, *Touch of Śakti*, op. cit. [note 79], p. 141). The usual translation is 'to unfold'; e.g., 'The universe is the unfoldment of his power', as according to *Śivasūtra* 3.30 (*Śiva Sūtras: The Yoga of Supreme Identity. Text of the Sūtras and the Commentary Vimarśinī of Kṣemarāja. Translated into English with Introduction, Notes, Running Exposition, Glossary and Index*, Jaideva Singh [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979], p. 196; these *sūtras*, or aphorisms, are traditionally considered to be a direct revelation of Śiva given to Vasugupta). They extend from the *Śiva tattva* through to the *pṛthivī tattva* (earth) (Padoux, *Vāc*, pp. 306–16). Of special interest are the first five levels, namely *Śiva*, where the power of consciousness predominates, *Śakti*, where the power of bliss predominates, *sadāśiva*, where the power of will predominates, *īśvara*, where the power of cognition predominates, and *śuddhavidyā*, where the power of action predominates (ibid., p. 193, n. 65). A thirty-seventh and even thirty-eighth *tattva* was posited by Abhinavagupta (Fürlinger, *Touch of Śakti*, op. cit., pp. 176–77). Cf. below, note 156.
87. Utpaladeva explains that the differentiated realities are constituted by 'the body, the intellect, the interior tactile sensation [that which reveals the vital breath] or that imagined entity which is the void (*śūnya*) beyond them, similar to ether' (ĪPK *vṛtti* 1.6.4–5 [my interpolation]; pp. 131–32, and Torella's notes thereto).
88. It is a 'subtle movement' (*kiñciccalana*) of flowing stillness, a 'pulsation of consciousness', which is called *Spanda* (see Dyczkowski's remarks in *Doctrine of Vibration*, op. cit. [note 78], p. 81). See further below, note 125.

89. It is said that *svātantrya śakti* is 'the supreme energy of Lord Śiva' (*Śiva Sūtras: The Supreme Awakening; with the commentary of Kshemaraja, revealed by Swami Lakshmanjoo*; ed. John Hughes [New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2007], p. 175).
90. According to the commentator Rājānaka Rāma (ca. 950–1000), 'that (will) is Śankara's [i.e., Śiva's] power, at one with Him. The realization of this fact leads to perfection in Yoga (*siddhi*) which is the recognition of one's own Lordship. This (will) is denoted by the word (generally used to mean) desire (*iccha*) because it is similar to the common desire of the worldly man' (*Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. 75). In his expository remarks on Stanza 48 of the *Spanda Kārikā*s, Dyczkowski writes that for Utpaladeva '[t]he power of action is like a river whose waves are all the forms of spatial and temporal relationships. It flows between subject and object and is made manifest by Śiva in a mirror of His own nature' (ibid., p. 260; see also below, note 131). The *Spanda Kārikā*s (*Concise Verses on Vibration*) are a synoptic interpretation on the foundation scripture of the *Spanda* school, the *Śiva Sūtras*. Stanza 48 corresponds to stanza 3.16 in the tripartite division of Kṣemarāja's commentary (see below, note 105).
91. The doctrine of *Pratyabhijñā* contends that Śiva in his own nature as the essentially shining universal subject is perfectly free to manifest himself as the objects of knowledge, which are yet indistinct from him. By his own independent power he creates that which is perceived to be separate—the dependent world of objectivity which makes practical activity possible (ĪPK 1.5.15–16, p. 122; ĪPV 1.5.15–16, pp. 76–78).
92. Introduction to section 1, chapter 7 of ĪPV, p. 98. See furthermore below, note 192.
93. According to the *Padma Purāṇa*, 'Viṣṇu ever worships the sapphire Devī, hence he attained his own state' (see *Lalitā-Sahasranāman. With Bhāskararāya's Commentary Translated into English*, 2nd ed., trans. R. Ananthakrishna Sastry [1951; repr., Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1970], p. 236). This text is an extended eulogy to the Goddess. Dyczkowski notes that it is especially in Vaiṣṇava works that analogies are drawn to the crystal (in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. 55).
94. Fürlinger emphasizes that Abhinavagupta makes strong use of metaphorical imagery in the *Tantrāloka*, as he not only encodes particular words with metaphorical power, but also 'builds whole *Bild-Felder* (image-scapes), in which the resonances between the different images overlap each other and through this create whirring and vibrating patterns' (*Touch of Śakti*, op. cit. [note 79], p. 57).
95. See Kṣemarāja, *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam: The Secret of Self-Recognition. Sanskrit Text with English Translation, Notes and Introduction by Jaideva Singh*, 4th rev. ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982), sūtra 8, auto-commentary; p. 68. By comparison, in the Śākta view, 'the *ātman* principle is steeped in the universe (i.e. that the universe is only a form of the Ātman)' (ibid). The *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* (*Heart of Recognition*) is a concise summary analysis of the School of *Pratyabhijñā* written by the foremost commentator Kṣemarāja.
96. ĪPK 1.6.7, and comm.; pp. 133–34. Given that 'comprehension' may involve the notion of subject and object, this technically cannot obtain at the level of Śiva, where he is at one within himself, but only as it is factored out into manifestation.
97. ĪPK 1.7.1; p. 136. Dyczkowski explains that the term '*pratibhā*' is a complex concept, and is often translated as 'intuition'. It can refer to the instinctive nature of animals, or 'as the [human] intuitive power to grasp meaning and cognitive events in their immediacy'; besides that, it can refer to 'the creative genius of the poet as well as the intelligence of the learned and that wisdom which expresses itself as man's moral sense that, at the highest level, is here understood to be the grace of insight by virtue of which one intuits one's own nature as the source of both bondage and liberation' (in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. 361, n. 12).
98. *Mālinīślokavārttika* 1.80 (in Hanneder, *Abhinavagupta's Philosophy*, op. cit. [note 81], p. 71).
99. ĪPK 1.7.13; p. 146. Elsewhere, Rājānaka Rāma explains that *māyā* is only an aspect of the role of *śakti* in manifesting the Lord 'in countless forms as both cognition and its objects, without (thereby) concealing the manifestation (*prakāśamānatā*) of its own nature as the power (of the Highest Lord)' (in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. 96).
100. ĪPK 3.1.7–8, pp. 193–94; and ĪPV 3.1.7–8, pp. 196–97.
101. See the remarks by Rājānaka Rāma in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. 107, where he explains that meaning as the denotation of words and its categories (i.e., naming) indicates the conceived notions or thoughts (*vikalpana*) that colour consciousness. In short, recognition by its very nature is a coloration of reality. Dyczkowski explains that the accomplished *yogi* discerns the ground of consciousness, Being qua Becoming, through 'the normally dense screen of thought constructs', and this represents seeing God 'through the multicoloured glass of thought' (ibid., p. 270).
102. According to the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (4.1): 'Who alone, himself without colour, wielding his power creates variously countless colours, and in whom the universe comes together at the beginning and dissolves in the end—may he furnish us with lucid intelligence' (in *Upaniṣads: A New Translation by*

Patrick Olivelle [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996] p. 259). Looking at it another way, the tantric way, and first positively: Brahman is undividingly coloured, as according to the indeterminate consciousness (*nirvikalpa saṃvid*) of the *yogi*, yet this informs and precedes the determinate consciousness of divided percepts such as blue, yellow, etc. Second, negatively speaking, indeterminate consciousness does not pervade determinate consciousness, but rather it abides *in between* what are mutually incompatible determinate ideas or percepts as they arise and pass on to another (see the commentary by Abhinavagupta, *A Trident of Wisdom. Translation of Parātrīśikā-vivaraṇa*, Jaideva Singh [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989], pp. 92–93). See furthermore Fürlinger's analysis in *Touch of Śakti*, op. cit. [note 79], pp. 167–69. He interprets the perceptual contact of divine light (*anuttara-saṁvit*):

> [T]o catch the first moment of a perception, be it inner (an emotion) or outer (a sensation), yet before the processes of discursive thinking, before the beginning of the contraction (*saṁkoca*) of the pure *cit* is the chance to touch the ultimate, undifferentiated, pure light (*prakāśa*) beyond time and space, also called *pratibhā* by Abhinavagupta. This 'catching' denotes one's awareness of *cit*—the pure, blissful, non-dualistic Light, which arises simultaneously with each moment of experience—in the experience of seeing, touching, eating, running and everything else. Normally, people live unaware of it. The aim of spiritual practice according to Trika is to reach this state of unlimited *saṁvit* and to remain within it throughout one's life: while walking, eating, conversing, shopping, and so forth. (167)

The tantric, then, seeks to be aware of the intervals of being; and perhaps, in a similar way, the kabbalist in seeking to visualize the states of divine being in himself is trying to see in between the colours of the Godhead (cf. above, note 43).

103. Utpaladeva states: 'In all things (*sarvatra*) the diversity of the manifestations is the source of temporal succession for those knowing subjects such as the void etc., whose light is discontinuous (*vicchinnabhāsaḥ*), but not for the knowing subject who shines once and for ever (*sakṛt*)' (ĪPK 2.1.6; p. 155). At the same time it must be noted that *śakti* reaggregates the broken reality of mentality into the Spirit (Self).
104. Abhinavagupta states in his *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛtivimarśinī* (ĪPVV): 'He who practices the elimination of thought constructs, his heart adorned with the jewelled necklace of uninterrupted thought-free cognitive awareness, enters the supreme state' (cited by Dyczkowski in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. 204). Dyczkowski explains that in accordance with the direct means of divine realization, Abhinavagupta 'interprets the devout effort, which it teaches should be exerted to discern *Spanda*, as that required to attend to the indeterminate cognition *saṃvedana*, which both reveals and is the source of determinate perceptions, and so decreases the latter in order to increase the former' (in ibid., p. 207).
105. According to the *Spanda Kārikā*s (3.14): 'The rise, in the bound soul, of all sorts of ideas marks the disappearance of the bliss of supreme immortality. On account of this, he loses his independence. The appearance of the ideas has its sphere in sense-objects' (in *The Yoga of Vibration and Divine Pulsation. A Translation of the Spanda Kārikās with Kṣemarāja's Commentary, the Spanda Nirṇaya*, Jaideva Singh [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992], p. 160).
106. Paul E. Muller-Ortega, 'Aspects of Jīvanmukti in the Tantric Śaivism of Kashmir', in *Living Liberation in Hindu Thought*, ed. Andrew O. Fort and Patricia Y. Munne (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 187–217 at 196. He notes that the term *siddha* is 'an ambiguous designation referring equally to spiritual perfection as well as to one's attainment of power' (195). For Abhinavagupta, the state of liberation basically means entering into the 'heart' of divine consciousness.
107. Virūpākṣa writes: 'For those who have transcended worldly existence through abstract knowledge [the object of knowledge] shines as submerged in the inner state. However, through the transmental [the object of knowledge shines as] both submerged in, and emerged from me, who am complete' (verse 44; in Lawrence, *Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One*, op. cit. [note 77], p. 119). Lawrence notes that '"Complete" (*pūrṇa*)/"completeness" (*pūrṇatva*) is a basic epistemological, metaphysical and psychological concept in Pratyabhijñā thought—which overlaps with those of absolute egoity and the subsumption of difference and sequence' (ibid., p. 120, n. 7).
108. ĪPV 1.1.1; p. 7.
109. ĪPK 1.5.18. Torella translates this *kārikā* as: 'Owing to the power of *māyā*, for the Lord it has as its object a cognizable reality differentiated [from self] and is called by the names of cognition, imagination, determination etc.' (in *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, op. cit. [note 80], p. 124). This verse has also been translated as:

> That [Consciousness] comes under the effect of *māyā-śakti*, the Lord's differentiating power, and consequently focuses on diverse objects and directs itself toward becoming the objects of senses and the sense organs. [In these forms, *citi*] is referred to by different names, such as *jñāna* (perceptual knowledge), *saṅkalpa* (imagination), and *adhyavasāya* (mental apprehension), and so on.

See *Īśvara Pratyabhijñā Kārikā of Utpaladeva: Verses on the Recognition of the Lord*, trans. and comm. B.N. Pandit; ed. Lise F. Vail (New Delhi: Muktabodha Indological Research Institute in association with Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2004), p. 66.

110. In *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. (note 84), p. 89. Kallaṭa is expositing Stanza 11: 'How can one who, as if astonished, beholds his own nature as that which sustains (all things) be subject to this accursed round of transmigration?'. Dyczkowski explains that for the School of *Pratyabhijñā*, 'an underlying unitary principle must exist behind the diversity of experience in order to account for its basic coherence and unity, as exemplified in the phenomena of recognition and memory' (in ibid., p. 195).
111. See the commentary by Abhinavagupta, in ĪPV 1.2.1–2; pp. 19–22.
112. Virūpākṣā writes: 'As the Self, that [awareness] is unitary, because there is no sequence in it of either place or time. However, as associated with objects of consciousness that are differentiated from each other, that [awareness] is the substratum of differentiation' (*Virūpākṣapañcāśika*, verse 12; in Lawrence, *Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One*, op. cit. [note 77], p. 80).
113. ĪPK 1.1.3; to wit: 'However, since He, though being directly perceived (*dṛṣṭe 'pi*), is not discerned for what He is because of delusion, precisely for this reason, by bringing His powers to light, the recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) of Him is shown' (p. 86). Torella notes here that '[t]he theme of the absolute impossibility of objectifying the I, Śiva, recurs with particular insistence in the work of Utp[aladeva]' (in *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, op. cit. [note 80], n. 9).
114. It is a question of *apprehending* the Self (*ātman*), for it is always *beheld*, in so far as Śiva is just the light of consciousness. On this point see the discussion by Nagel on the dynamic of 'seeing-and-noticing' an object in its environment through attentive behaviour (Bruno M.J. Nagel, 'Unity and Contradiction: Some Arguments in Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta for the Evidence of the Self as Śiva', *Philosophy East and West* 45, no. 4 [1995]: 501–25 at 515–16). Compare the epistemological views of the Hungarian philosopher Michael Polanyi (1891–1976), who argued that personal knowledge is acquired by apprehending the particulars of a thing and how they cohere into a whole. In this process we have both a focal awareness and a subsidiary awareness, where the latter is incorporated into the former and constitutes a 'tacit knowing', which can be disrupted if we switch our focal attention to the particulars that are otherwise subsumed by our comprehension. For example, '[i]f a pianist shifts his attention from the piece he is playing to the observation of what he is doing with his fingers while playing it, he gets confused and may have to stop' (*Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962], p. 56). Basically, the art of knowing is a skilful integration of the particulars of a comprehensive entity, achieved within the framework of our bodily and cultural being; it is a process of interiorization, or 'indwelling'. See also his essays in *The Tacit Dimension* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1983).
115. According to the *Lakṣmī Tantra* (14.22): 'Just as an object though lying right in front of a person does not appear in his mind when preoccupied, so also am I not realized by those whose (minds) are afflicted by impressions' (see *Lakṣmī Tantra: A Pāñcarātra Text. Translation and Notes with Introduction*, Sanjukta Gupta [Netherlands, 1972; repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000], p. 75). Gupta writes in this respect: 'Blurred by impressions left by the experience of mundane affairs, the mind fails to reflect truth' (ibid., n. 2).
116. *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. (note 84), p. 115. See his extensive explanation of Stanzas 36 and 37. These are given together as: 'Just as an object which is not seen clearly at first, even when the mind attends to it carefully, later becomes fully evident when observed with the effort exerted through one's own (inherent) strength (*svabala*); When (the yogi) lays hold of that same power in the same way, then whatever (he perceives manifests to him) quickly in accord with its true nature (*paramārthena*), whatever be its form, locus, time or state' (ibid., 114–15). (These correspond respectively to verses 3.4 and 5 in Kṣemarāja's version, in *Yoga of Vibration*, op. cit. [note 105], pp. 135–36.) Dyczkowski glosses that this is in the context of inferring fire from smoke, but another example is that of a jeweller who spots a valuable gem placed amongst others of no value and instantly discerns its true worth (in *Stanzas on Vibration*, p. 245).
117. In *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. (note 84), p. 346, n. 46.
118. *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, sūtra 15 (Kṣemarāja, *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, op. cit. [note 95], p. 89). In the next sūtra Kṣemarāja avers: 'When the bliss of cit is attained, there is stability of the consciousness of identity with cit even while the body etc. are being experienced. This state is jīvanmukti (i.e. mukti even while one is alive)' (ibid., p. 91).
119. As is explained in Stanza 21 of *Spandakārikā*s: 'Therefore he who strives constantly to discern the *Spanda* principle rapidly attains his own (true) state of being even while in the waking state itself' (*Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. xvi). There are, explains Dyczkowski, 'three common or worldly (*laukika*) states of consciousness, that is, waking, dreaming and deep sleep', and the tantric practitioner seeks to live pervasively, yet unaffectedly in these states, and by doing so will attain to the

'fourth state', *turīya*, or *turya*, where objectivity (*idantā*) does not obscure subjectivity (*ahantā*); moreover, the contemplative absorption of the *yogi* in these states 'is the blissful experience he has of his own pure conscious nature as the perceiver' (in ibid., p. 191).

120. *Śivasūtra*, *vimarśinī*, 1.13, where Kṣemarāja adduces the *Netratantra* (*Śiva Sūtras*, op. cit. [note 86], p. 55). Alexis Sanderson likewise cites the *Netratantra*: 'That supreme Power is my innate and omnipotent will, [one with me] as heat is one with fire or the sun's rays with the sun itself' ('Doctrine of the Mālinīvijayottaratantra', in *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism: Studies in Honor of André Padoux*, ed. Teun Goudriaan [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992], pp. 281–312 at 306, n. 87). This general idea is noted in other traditions. Cf. the remark made by Gregory the Great: 'Heat is a *natural property* of fire, luminosity to the sunbeam' (René Barnes, *The Power of God: Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology* [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001], p. 262, n. 9; cf. 276).
121. See, for example, *An Introduction to Tantric Philosophy: The* Paramārthasāra *of Abhinavagupta with the Commentary of Yogarāja*, trans. Lyne Bansat-Boudon and Kamaleshadatta Tripathi; introduction, notes, critically revised Sanskrit text, appendix, indices by Lyne Bansat-Boudon (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 221.
122. For example, in the *Lakṣmī Tantra*, Lakṣmī states: 'My body incorporating knowledge resides in Viṣṇu's heart. This is the sacred knowledge relating to the Self and this is the absolute yogic knowledge. Just as the beauty of moonbeams is identical with the moon, so am I, Śakti of Viṣṇu the possessor of Śakti, abiding inseparably (in Him)' (50.69–70; p. 341). The moon of course is only a source of illumination inasmuch as it reflects the light of the Sun that falls upon it. The Bond albedo (A_B) of the moon is an average 0.12; that is, it reflects to space 12% of the total incident solar energy (*McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology*, 10th ed., s.v. 'Albedo').
123. See the commentary by Bhāskara on *Śiva Sūtra* 1.5—'*udyamo bhairavaḥ* (Bhairava is upsurge)'—in *The Aphorisms of Śiva: The* ŚivaSūtra *with Bhāskara's Commentary, the* Vārttika. *Translated with Exposition and Notes*, Mark S.G. Dyczkowski (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 22. The highest level of spiritual practice, *śāmbhavopāya*, follows the mode of resounding assimilation in Bhairava. It is the quickest route to divine consciousness, which is achieved without recourse to meditating, or reciting *mantra*s, and which only '([c]ertain) individuals are fit to practise' (see the anonymous commentator's remarks to this *sūtra*, and Dyczkowski's exposition in ibid., pp. 22–23). Yogarāja explains that the three syllables of the name Bhairava stand for 'maintenance (***bha****raṇa*), withdrawal (***ra****vaṇa*) and ejection (***va****mana*) [of the world], inasmuch as [within him alone] all the sensory domains—sound, etc.—are enjoyed, dissolved, and made resplendent…' (*Introduction to Tantric Philosophy*, op. cit. [note 121], p. 255).
124. These are the remarks of an anonymous commentator on *Śiva Sūtra* 1.5 (see ibid.). The notion that recognition is an aesthetic realization is key to Abhinavagupta's philosophy (see Edwin Gerow, 'Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics as a Speculative Paradigm', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114, no. 2 [1994]: 186–208 at 189).
125. *Trident of Wisdom*, op. cit. (note 102), pp. 190–91. In his introductory remarks to his *Spanda-nirṇaya* (*Discernment of Vibration*), Kṣemarāja states that Śiva is characterized as having the power of absolute freedom, *svātantrya-Śakti*, which is none other than *spanda*: 'This Śakti of the lord who is non-moving, being of the nature of consciousness . . . is known as *spanda* in accordance with the root meaning of the word signifying slight movement (*kiñcit calattā*). Thus the essential nature of the Lord is perpetual *spanda* (creative pulsation). He is never without *spanda*' (*Yoga of Vibration*, op. cit. [note 105], p. 10). It is the same power that invigorates human awareness, as the intellect, vital breath, and body are deployed to realize integration with Śiva. Dyczkowski explains that for Abhinavagupta 'meditation consists of the conscious experience of the movement—*Spanda*—of the cycles of cognitive consciousness out through the body, that is, through the complex unity of the senses, their objects and the vital breath' (in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. 271).
126. Abhinavagupta writes in his *Paramārthasāra* (kā. 68): 'Awakened (*pratibuddha*) in this way, [the person] sacrifices all thought-constructs (*vikalpāḥ*) in the light of the Self, illuminated (*dīpta*) by the touch (*samīra*) of realization (*bhāvanā*), and becomes full of light'. Fürlinger cites this verse in his examination of the relationship of touch and light (*Touch of Śakti*, op. cit. [note 79], p. 121).
127. *Mālinīślokavārttika* 1.40–41 (in Hanneder, *Abhinavagupta's Philosophy*, op. cit. [note 81], p. 65; and see his commentary at p. 152). As Singh explains, appearances (*ābhāsa*s) rise and disappear like waves on the sea of universal consciousness (in *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, op. cit. [note 95], p. 19).
128. Virūpākṣa writes: 'Its body is the sky of consciousness. In that, it which [*sic*] is like the ocean of milk, creates and destroys the universe through the conjunction and disjunction of the waves of its Śaktis' (*Virūpākṣapañcāśika*, verse 13; in Lawrence, *Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One*, op. cit. [note 77], p. 81.

See also verse 20; p. 90). In other words, the essential nature of awareness is that of an expansive body, a sky—or metaphorical ocean—of consciousness, in which objects are consonant with the Self.

129. Vidyācakravartin comments: 'One may experience the universe, in whatever way it exists, in either its gross or subtle forms. However, in no case could it be external to consciousness, which has the nature of recognitive apprehension. Similarly, waves, and so on, could not be external to water…' (in Lawrence, *Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One*, op. cit. [note 77], p. 85).
130. According to Virūpākṣa: 'Objects of knowledge, such as the [fleshly] body and [other external] objects, enter knowledge. [Knowledge] is [thereby] penetrated by their sequence. By way of knowledge, the [object of knowledge] dissolves in the knower and takes on its character' (*Virūpākṣapañcāśika*, verse 37; in Lawrence, *Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One*, op. cit. [note 77], p. 110).
131. *Yoga of Vibration*, op. cit. (note 105), p. 11. Dyczkowski adduces Abhinavagupta on the way in which the 'subject pours out of itself onto the object with the intention of appropriating it for itself, [and] it assumes the form of a wave (*ūrmi*) or pulsation (*spanda*) of consciousness' (in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. 203). For further explication see the gloss by Bansat-Boudon, *Introduction to Tantric Philosophy*, op. cit. (note 121), pp. 196–97, n. 872.
132. According to verse 110 of the *Vijñānabhairava*: 'Just as waves arise from water, flames from fire, rays from the sun, even so the waves (variegated aspects) of the universe have arisen in differentiated forms from me[,] i.e. *Bhairava*' (*Yoga of Delight*, op. cit. [note 83], p. 99).
133. In *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. (note 84), p. 225.
134. Ibid. As the author of the *Vijñānabhairava* concludes: 'O Goddess! I have revealed 112 methods of reaching quietude (lit. the waveless state of the mind), knowing which a person becomes wise' (verse 139; in *Vijñāna Bhairava: The Practice of Centring Awareness. Commentary by Swami Lakshman Joo*, trans. Bettina Bäumer [Varanasi: Indica Books, 2002], p. 165). Lakshman Joo comments that these are 'techniques of a tideless state' (ibid., p. 166). See also *Lakṣmī Tantra* 35.7–10; p. 203. The idea of quietude is related to the *yogi*'s coming to rest after sexual ejaculation. Abhinavagupta states in this regard: 'Any "rested" form, because it is developed with heart-felt attention, arrives at the "rested" state of Śiva. It is called "the sea of subsiding billows"' (TĀ 29.133cd–134ab; in John R. Dupuche, *Abhinavagupta. The Kula Ritual as Elaborated in Chapter 29 of the Tantrāloka* [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2006], p. 273; see the analysis here by Fürlinger, *Touch of Śakti*, op. cit. [note 79], p. 211).
135. The commentator Bhagavadutpala states 'that (the expansion of consciousness and its contraction) are instrumental both in the creation and destruction of the universe and (in giving rise) to both worldly enjoyment (*bhukti*) and liberation (*mukti*). In other words (when the yogi's consciousness) expands (he thereby enjoys) many diverse experiences while by its contraction (he achieves) liberation which is (the tranquil state of pure consciousness) free of the waves (of manifestation) (*nistaraṅgarūpatā*)' (*Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. 145). The association of waves and mental agitation is probably an ancient one. This could be applied as a gnostic interpretation to the incident in the New Testament (Mark 4:39–40) in which Jesus stilled the choppy seas, and walked on water—he floated above the turmoil of the senses.
136. On the metaphor of the ocean and wave for absorptive consciousness see the discussion by Paul Eduardo Muller-Ortega, *The Triadic Heart of Śiva: Kaula Tantricism of Abhinavagupta in the Non-Dual Shaivism of Kashmir* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 146–51. I am equating the wave formations with *Śakti*, as per the remarks of Dyczkowski (*Doctrine of Vibration*, op. cit. [note 78], p. 190).
137. See *Spanda-kārikā*s, stanza 19: 'The streams of the pulsation (*spanda*) of the qualities along with the other (principles) are grounded in the universal vibration (of consciousness) and so attain being; therefore they can never obstruct the enlightened' (*Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. xvi).
138. See ĪPK 2.3.15–16, which reads in full:

    > What function can the means of knowledge perform – being a new light (*navābhāsaḥ*) – as regards the knowing subject, he who exists in the absolute sense, the Lord – like a smooth wall that is the substratum for the painting of the multiform universe –, whose association with non-being would be a contradiction in terms, the Ancient One, whose nature is perennially manifest (*sarvadābhāta*), inherent in every cognition?

    Utpaladeva provides clarification in his *vṛtti* (pp. 172–73). In short, according to the non-dualistic thought of Trika, the luminous manifestation of all reality is akin to a wondrous painting of the manifold universal forms, which is to be appreciated in its total beauty of divine being (Bettina Bäumer, 'Light and Reflection: The Metaphysical Background of Aesthetics in Kashmir Śaivism', in *Aesthetic Theories and Forms in Indian Tradition*, ed. Kapila Vatsyayan and D.P. Chattopadhyaya, 127–47 (New Delhi: Centre for Studies in Civilizations: Distributed by Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 2008).
139. ĪPV 2.3.15–16; p. 161.

140. *Virūpākṣapañcāśika*, verse 30, with the commentary (in Lawrence, *Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One*, op. cit. [note 77], p. 100).
141. Ibid., verse 33 (ibid., p. 103).
142. See ibid., verse 36, and commentary thereon (in ibid, pp. 108–9). On this and the previous cited verses see Lawrence's analysis at pp. 32–37.
143. See *Spanda Kārikā* 1.5, which Singh translates as: 'Wherein neither pain, nor pleasure, nor object, nor subject, exists, nor wherein does even insentiency exist—that, in the highest sense, is that *Spanda* principle' (in *Yoga of Vibration*, op. cit. [note 105], p. 45). As Kṣemarāja opines, 'when in that noble person who attentively pursues the teaching, the *Spanda* principle, whose quintessence is flashing, throbbing consciousness, becomes manifest, then even when experiences of pain, pleasure, object, subject or their absence occur, they are considered by him as naught, because to him everything appears only as the quintessence of the delight of *Spanda*' (ibid., p. 48). Cf. Dyczkowski's exposition on this *kārikā* and the various interpretations that are offered by the four commentators (in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], pp. 196–201).
144. As Rājānaka Rāma puts it, in commenting on Stanza 1 of the *Spandakārikā*s (*Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. 76). The Goddess explains that the adept 'may regard this universe as a painting of which I am the canvas' (see *Lakṣmī Tantra*, 43.28–35; p. 289; Gupta notes here that this image accords 'with the Vedānta metaphysics [as] it underlines the illusory aspects of creation, by comparing it to a painting on the vast canvas of the all-pervading Śakti' [ibid., n. 2]).
145. Gerow draws attention to the way in which the metaphor of the 'wall' (*bhitta*) is prevalent in Abhinavagupta's philosophic and aesthetic writings ('Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics', op. cit. [note 124], p. 188, n. 17).
146. ĪPK 1.6.10–11 and comm., p. 135, and also see 4.1.15 and comm., p. 218; ĪPV 1.6.10–11, pp. 96–97, and 4.1.15, pp. 228–29.
147. Woodroffe quotes a passage from the Śākta text *Yoginīhṛdaya* (*The Heart of the Yoginī*): 'He painted the World-Picture on Himself with the Brush which is His Will and was pleased therewith' (John Woodroffe, *Śakti and Śākta: Essays and Addresses*, 7th ed. [Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1969], p. 28). However, according to Padoux, the commentator Amṛtānanda quotes this 'well-known formula' in his *Dīpikā* (*The Lamp*) as: 'The Lord Śiva gladdens having seen the infinite diversity of the world which he has drawn out with the brush of his own will" (*The Heart of the Yogini: The* Yoginīhṛdaya, *a Sanskrit Tantric Treatise*, Introduction, translation and commentary by André Padoux with Roger-Orphé Jeanty [New York: Oxford University Press, 2013], p. 43).
148. On the changes in the status of Shekhinah see Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, op. cit. (note 16), pp. 65–66; Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape*, op. cit. (note 5), p. 193.
149. It may not be quite so clear-cut as this, for Shekhinah especially. See my working paper, 'The Erotic Imaginary of Divine Realization in Kabbalistic and Tantric Metaphysics', available at http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:179374.
150. On the Śaiva view see *Śivasūtra* 1.16 and 17 and commentary thereon (*Śiva Sūtras*, op. cit. [note 86], pp. 61–65), and on the Śākta view see *Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇava* 1.105, 4.61, and 5.20 (in *The Kulacūḍāmaṇi Tantra and the Vāmakeśvara Tantra, with the Jayaratha Commentary*, introduced, translated and annotated by Louise M. Finn [Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1986], pp. 254, 362, and 383).
151. See, for example, *Lalitā-Sahasranāma: A Comprehensive Study of One Thousand Names of Lalitā Mahā-tripurasundarī*, trans. L.M. Joshi (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 1998). Interestingly, in the *Mālinīślokavārttika*, Abhinavagupta writes: '[For the purpose of worship] he [is described as having] three powers or one power, or [as being the one] God alone. Or (*atha*) there is power alone which is described in the *Sāraśāstra* as the Goddess' (*śloka* 93; in Hanneder, *Abhinavagupta's Philosophy*, op. cit. [note 81], p. 73). Hanneder comments that this remark was seen as suspicious by the Śaiva mainstream (ibid., 169).
152. There is a fine line between the worship of Śiva as the ultimate divinity and the worship of his realizable aspect, Śakti. Kṣemarāja opens his commentary on the *Spanda-kārikā*s with a benediction to the goddess of consciousness:

> She, who is ever conscious of the vitality of mantra, who is the endless flash of the perfect and complete I-consciousness whose essence consists in a multitude of letters [sc. the Sanskrit alphabet], who is the goddess embodying *jñāna* (knowledge), ever knows the totality of categories from earth up to Śiva, which is one in substance with Her own Self and is portrayed out of Her own nature on the canvas of Her own free, clear Self just as a city is reflected in a mirror (from which it is non-distinct). Hail to that Energy of creative pulsation (*spandaśakti*) of Śiva (*Śāṃkarī*) that exults in glory all over the world. (*Yoga of Vibration*, op. cit. [note 105], p. 2 [my interpolation])

Dyczkowski remarks on this pregnant explanation that it brings together the major features of Kṣemarāja's theology of *Spanda*, whereby 'the Goddess as the source of all things is the mother of Śiva;

She is such in the sense that, as the goddess of consciousness, the power of perception (*dṛgdevī*), She makes even Śiva, the highest principle, accessible to vision and hence "generates" Him' (in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. 54). In a way, the same could be said of Shekhinah as the generator of Tiferet.

153. Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, op. cit. (note 65), p. 374.
154. See Raphael Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 3rd enl. ed. (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1990), pp. 135–54.
155. From the perspective of the Śaiva tantras, Śakti is strictly aligned with Śiva, and cannot be considered apart from him. Abhinavagupta says so explicitly in his *Parātrīśikāvivaraṇa*: 'it should be borne in mind that Śakti never considers herself as different from Śiva' (*Trident of Wisdom*, op. cit. [note 102], p. 8).
156. Torella notes that for the latter this is the case sometimes in the *Śivadṛṣṭivṛtti* (*Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, op. cit. [note 80], p. 189, n. 2). The *Śivadṛṣṭivṛtti* is a commentary by Utpaladeva on the foundational text of *Pratyabhijñā*, the *Śivadṛṣṭi* (*Vision of Śiva*), which was written by the sage Somānanda. (I note that Lawrence translates it as 'Cognition of Śiva' [*Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One*, op. cit. {note 77}, p. 8].) Citing Torella's note, Bansat-Boudon glosses: 'According to Bhāskara, though Śiva and Paramaśiva are not different in essence, Śiva is meant to refer to his specific nature (*svarūpanirdeśa*) while Paramaśiva is the all-inclusive form, which implies his pervading (*vyāpaka*) the whole scale of the *tattvas*. However, Paramaśiva is not to be considered a thirty-seventh *tattva*: he who pervades (*vyāpaka*) cannot be located in the same series as those pervaded (*vyāpya*)' (*Introduction to Tantric Philosophy*, op. cit. [note 121], p. 125, n. 513). This view would make for an interesting comparison with Ein Sof and Keter, and suggests that Keter is the 'specific nature' of the all-inclusive Ein Sof; and Ein Sof cannot be considered a *sefirah*, although it does pervade the *sefirot*.
157. The composite term *ein sof* gradually developed from an adverbial use to a substantive use (Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, op. cit. [note 7], pp. 266–70).
158. Ariel, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 18), p. 101; Hallamish, *Introduction to the Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 21), p. 135.
159. Ariel, *Kabbalah*, pp. 98–99 (the quoted phrase is on p. 99). Symbolically, the letters of the Holy Name, YHVH, comprise all the *sefirot*; as Matt explains: 'The י (*yod*) symbolizes the primordial point of *Ḥokhmah*, while its upper stroke symbolizes *Keter*. The first ה (*he*), often a feminine marker, symbolizes the Divine Mother, *Binah*. The ו (*vav*), whose numerical value is six, symbolizes *Tif'eret* and the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Ḥesed* through *Yesod*). The second ה (*he*) symbolizes *Shekhinah*' (*Zohar*, Vol. 5, p. 158, n. 55).
160. Griswold, *Brahman*, op. cit. (note 69), pp. 54–57, 76; Flood, *Introduction to Hinduism*, op. cit. (note 71), p. 242.
161. The text of *Parātrīśikā* opens with the term 'Anuttara' ('*Anuttaraṃ kathaṃ deva*'). The *śloka* is translated by Singh:

    > The exalted goddess said (to Bhairava): 'O God, how does the unsurpassable divine Consciousness bring about immediately the achievement of the identity of the empirical I with the perfect I-consciousness of Śiva which comes about in this very physical body and by the mere knowledge of which one acquires sameness with the Universal Consciousness-power (*khecarī*)?'. (*Trident of Wisdom*, op. cit. [note 102], pp. 5–6)

    In his commentary, Abhinavagupta explains the term *anuttara* in sixteen different ways (ibid., pp. 20–25).
162. Abhinavagupta states: 'Thus the unsurpassable (*anuttara*) is that whose essence is absolute Freedom, which is not determined by time, i.e. which transcends all temporal concepts, which is an embodiment of activity (*kriyāśakti*)' (*Trident of Wisdom*, op. cit. [note 102], p. 27).
163. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) wrote a highly influential analysis, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, first published in 1781, and revised in 1787. These editions are conventionally referred to as A and B, and are cited here in accordance with the page references to, or section number of, the German work (published as Vols 4 and 3 of *Kant's gesammelte Schriften* by Walter de Gruyter). I shall also cite the corresponding pagination of the English translation by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, *The Critique of Pure Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). There is much more that could be said on the issue of applying Kantian terminology to mystical ideation, and I have done so elsewhere: 'The Art of Mysticism: An Inquiry into the Notion of Ineffability in (Western) Christian Mysticism' (PhD diss., University of Queensland, 2007), pp. 126–74. In his comprehensive work, Stephen R. Palmquist assesses Kant's understanding of religion. In a long-term project that aims at establishing the systematic nature of Kant's critical philosophy, Palmquist argues *inter alia* that Kant is not necessarily antipathetic to mystical experiences; for, as long as they 'are not regarded as conveying *empirical knowledge*, and as long as they do result in an improvement or strengthening of the person's moral outlook, a refined or "Critical" form of mysticism can be seen to fit quite comfortably into Kant's

System'; and moreover, 'Kant was no stranger to mystical ideas and metaphors' (*Kant's Critical Religion: Volume Two of Kant's System of Perspectives* [Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000], pp. 15–16; cf. his comment that Kant had an 'inherently mystical disposition' [p. 319, n. 22]). See especially Part Four, on 'Kant's Perspectival Foundation for Critical Mysticism'.

164. Kant basically argues that we are sensibly affected by objects in the intuition, and this produces representations in the imagination and concepts in the understanding. In the Transcendental Aesthetic (i.e., the 'science of all principles of *a priori* sensibility') he states that '[t]he undetermined object of an empirical intuition is called *appearance* [*Erscheinungen*]', which has a formal and material aspect:

> I call that in the appearance which corresponds to sensation its *matter*, but that which allows the manifold of appearance to be ordered in certain relations I call the *form* of appearance. Since that within which the sensations can alone be ordered and placed in a certain form cannot itself be in turn sensation, the matter of all appearance is only given to us *a posteriori*, but its form must all lie ready for it in the mind *a priori*, and can therefore be considered separately from all sensation. (A20/B34; pp. 172–73)

It is worth noting here that Kant employs the term 'intuition' (*Anschauung*), which is based on the Latin word *intuitas*, to mean not 'hunch', but rather 'the capacity . . . to have singular and immediate representations of particular objects by means of the senses' (Guyer, 'Introduction', in *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 36).

165. For Kant, cognition, and therefore the possibility of experience, is based on combinatory thinking, i.e., a synthesis of the manifold of representations as it is exhibited in the continuing identity of one consciousness—the 'I think'; this is the 'transcendental unity of apperception', and through this self-conscious activity the world is understood (conceptualized), allowing judgements to be made through the application of the categories—of quantity, quality, relation, and modality (§§15–27; pp. 245–66). See Béatrice Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge: Sensibility and Discursivity in the Transcendental Analytic of the* Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Charles T. Wolfe (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998). John Sallis writes that human thought is characterized by a fundamental disunity, a fragmented lack of wholeness and self-sufficiency, which needs to be brought or gathered together to be meaningful (*The Gathering of Reason*, 2nd ed. [Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009], pp. 26–37).

166. In his lectures published in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, Kant referred to the wealth of possible representations that are available on the 'immense map of our mind' (cited by Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, op. cit. [note 165], p. 65).

167. Kant explains that the combination of the manifold of representation is both figurative and intellectual, where the former, the so-called *synthesis speciosa*, refers to the transcendental role of the imagination in spontaneously synthesizing the intuitions, in accordance with the categories (pure concepts of the understanding). As the 'productive imagination', it constitutes the 'effect of the understanding on sensibility' (see §24; pp. 256–57). The divine light as an immediate, raw 'object' to the mystical perception may be called 'appearance', but as this phenomenal object is thought in the understanding (reflected in concepts) it is known under the idea of God. Longuenesse explains that Kant 'distinguish[es] between *apparentia* and *phaenomenon*, the object "simply as appearance" (the indeterminate object of an empirical intuition) and the object "as object," "corresponding to intuition." For example, informed by experience (the systematic comparison of our sensible intuitions), we recognize the shape seen from afar as an object (*phaenomenon*) that we thus think under the concept "tower," and which we thereby distinguish from the *apparentia* immediately present to our intuition (a rectangular shape of various shades of brown standing out on the surrounding horizon…)' (*Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, op. cit. [note 165], p. 25; also 69 and 71).

168. Kant states that 'the power of judgment is the faculty of *subsuming* under rules, i.e., of determining whether something stands under a given rule'. It 'is a special talent that cannot be taught but only practiced', and is a product of 'mother-wit' (A132–33/B171–72; p. 268). What makes possible the application of the category to the appearance of a thing, i.e. a mediating representation, is the 'transcedental schema' (A138/B177; p. 272).

169. The schema is just a 'representation of a general procedure of the imagination for providing a concept with its image' (A140/B179–80; p. 273). It is a way of conceptualizing appearances. Kant refers for example to the particular image of a triangle, which is ever inadequate to its concept:

> For it would not attain the generality of the concept, which makes this valid for all triangles, right or acute, etc., but would always be limited to one part of this sphere. The schema of the triangle can never exist anywhere except in thought, and signifies a rule of the synthesis of the imagination with regard to pure shapes in space. (A141/B180; p. 273)

He further states that

> the *image* is a product of the empirical faculty of productive imagination, the *schema* of sensible concepts (such as figures in space) is a product and as it were a monogram of pure *a priori* imagination, through which and in accordance with which the images first become possible, but which must be connected with the concept, to which they are in themselves never fully congruent, always only by means of the schema that they designate. (A141–42/B181; pp. 273–74)

170. There are similarities to the way in which the kabbalists conceptualize the Godhead as the primordial figure of Adam Kadmon, and the Hindu ideas on the 'Primal Person', *Puruṣa* (see Braj M. Sinha, 'Divine Anthropos and Cosmic Tree: Hindu and Jewish Mysticism in Comparative Perspective', in *Indo-Judaic Studies in the Twenty-First Century: A View from the Margin*, ed. Ranabir Chakravarti, Braj M. Sinha, and Shalva Weil [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007], pp. 93–112 at 97–103).
171. According to Kant, in order to have insight into the possibility of things the categories must be given objective reality by an intuition, 'and so it is confirmed that the categories are not by themselves *cognitions*, but mere *forms of thought* for making cognitions out of given intuitions' (B288–89; p. 334).
172. A contemporary commentator remarks that *Śiva-tattva* is 'the noumenal aspect of the Absolute and *śakti-tattva* is its phenomenal aspect' (Pandit, *Īśvara Pratyabhijñā Kārikā*, op. cit. [note 109], p. 156). Kant famously elaborated his distinction between the noumenon and the phenomenon in the third chapter of the Analytic of Principles (A235–60/B294–315; pp. 354–65). The concept of a *noumenon* refers to a thing in itself (*Ding an sich*), which cannot be an object of the senses but is thought only through a pure understanding, while a *phenomenon* is a thing that appears to us sensibly in our intuition and is apprehended. Kant refers to noumena in a negative and positive way. He explains:

> If by a noumenon we understand a thing *insofar as it is not an object of our sensible intuition*, because we abstract from the manner of our intuition of it, then this is a noumenon in the *negative* sense. But if we understand by that an *object of a non-sensible intuition*, then we assume a special kind of intuition, namely intellectual intuition, which, however, is not our own, and the possibility of which we cannot understand, and this would be the noumenon in a *positive* sense. (B307; pp. 360–1)

Although Kant does not accept the possibility of being able to cognize God, i.e., have empirical knowledge of God, his predecessor Gottfried Liebniz (1646–1716) did accept that 'it is possible to know noumena, the intelligible substances or monads giving rise to appearances, through intellectual intuition' (Jill Vance Buroker, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: An Introduction* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], p. 202). In the traditional reading of Kant's idealism the transcendental distinction between appearances and things in themselves is understood as an ontological difference between two sets of entities, which is the so-called 'two-object' or 'two-world' view; but it may also be understood as different ways of *considering* things, which is the so-called 'two-aspect' view (see Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, rev. and enl. ed. [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004], pp. 3 and 16). According to Anthony Savile, Kant replaced the two-world view in the A edition with the two-aspect view in the B edition (*Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: An Orientation to the Central Theme* [Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005], p. 105). It may be that both approaches can be applied to kabbalistic and tantric ideas on God and reality. I note by the by a suggestive observation by Isabelle Ratié: on the Buddhist view, *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, or in their terms, 'indeterminate cognition' and 'determinate cognition', 'are considered as two *different kinds of cognitions*…. [b]y contrast, according to the Pratyabhijñā, '*prakāśa* and *vimarśa* only denote *two aspects of any given cognition*' ('Otherness in the Pratyabhijñā Philosophy', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 35 [2007]: 313–70 at 340 and 341).
173. Kant states that the noumenon as a 'domain outside of the sphere of appearances is empty (for us)', and so it serves as a 'boundary concept . . . limit[ing] the pretension of sensibility' (B310–11; p. 362).
174. There may be another way of looking at this. Palmquist applies his perspectival principles to Kant's arguments in the *Critique of Pure Reason* in regard to his theory of the 'object' of knowledge, which evince a progression 'from the most abstract transcendental object-term (thing in itself) to the most concrete (appearance), then moves from the most concrete empirical object-term (phenomenon) to the most abstract (positive noumenon)' (*Kant's Critical Religion*, op. cit. [note 163], p. 52; and diagram at p. 53). Hence, from a transcendental perspective, Anuttara/Ein Sof is the thing in itself, Śiva/Tiferet is the transcendental object, and Śakti/Shekhinah is the appearance, while from an empirical perspective Śakti/Shekhinah is the phenomenon, Śiva/Tiferet is the negative noumenon, and Anuttara/Ein Sof is the positive noumenon. In other words, perhaps, mystical consciousness initially views the absolute God as the distant unknown ground, in front of which is Śiva/Tiferet, which is knowable by the appearance of Śakti/Shekhinah; but then later, from this realization of divinity in oneself (the phenomenon of Śakti/Shekhinah), God (i.e., Śiva/Tiferet) is viewed through the spiritual senses and acknowledged as the ground of one's existence (Anuttara/Ein Sof).

175. For the kabbalists it was a pressing issue because 'the fundamental axiom of monotheism as it was commonly understood by the rabbinic elite in the late Middle Ages' could not be negated (Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, op. cit. [note 65], p. 98). The thinkers of the *Pratyabhijñā* had more room to manoeuvre within the purview of a monistic, or perhaps more accurately, a non-dual theology. Interestingly, Dyczkowski remarks that the doctrine of *Spanda* is essentially theistic, in its devotional understanding of Śiva as both supreme principle and personal God (*Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. 177).
176. The term *sefirot* can be approximately translated as 'spheres' or 'regions' (Scholem, *Major Trends*, op. cit. [note 9], p. 206). In his informed exegesis of *Śivasütra* 3.4—'You must make all the circles (*kalās*) in your body enter one into the other from gross to subtle'—Swami Lakshman Joo explains that 'there are five circles or enclosures that form the boundaries for all the thirty-six *tattvas*', and it is necessary to make these subtly graded circles enter into each other within one's body, in the states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep (*Śiva Sūtras*, op. cit. [note 89], p. 137).
177. Mathematically, a particle that is moving at a constant speed in a circle (uniform circular motion) experiences a force that is toward the centre of the circle, given by $F = mv^2/R$.
178. I am taking the notion of rainbow here as being feminine, given that Shekhinah is correlated with the divine cloud of glory (see Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, op. cit. [note 9], p. 334, n. 30; cf. Matt, *Zohar*, Vol. 1, p. 428, n. 652), and as she corresponds to the diadem (*ṣiṣ*) of the crown of divinity (Wolfson, ibid., p. 361). Tishby comments that a particular characteristic of Shekhinah 'is that it has no light or definite color of its own, but, on the other hand, precisely because of this, it acts as a mirror for every light and colour. The different nuances of color, the rays of light, and the shadows that they cast, flicker unceasingly within the *sefirah*, and, because of this continuous stream of transformations, it is depicted as representing the variegated nature of the divine world' (*Wisdom of the Zohar*, op. cit. [note 6], p. 371). The Śākta text, *Saundaryalaharī*, refers to the golden crown of Devī (i.e., Śakti) as being like the rainbow (*The Saundaryalaharī or Flood of Beauty; Traditionally Ascribed to Śankarācārya*, ed. and trans., W. Norman Brown [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958], v. 42; p. 64). The rainbow is basically an electromagnetic phenomenon: 'From the standpoint of Maxwell's electromagnetic theory, the rainbow [is] nothing more than a special case of a sphere scattering electromagnetic waves' (Raymond L. Lee, Jr., and Alistair B. Fraser, *The Rainbow Bridge: Rainbows in Art, Myth, and Science* [University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press; Bellingham, Washington: SPIE Press, 2001], p. 313). It might be said that Śakti–Shekhinah is the collective water droplets that make up the cloud of consciousness, which refracts the light-rays of Śiva–Tiferet into the soul, and which produces the rainbow of imagination.
179. The *Vijñānabhairava* declares that the state of being with Bhairava is a blissful divine consciousness that 'is always full' (verse 15); and '[Bhairava's] body of glory should be known as immaculate, all-inclusive fullness' (verse 16) (in *Vijñāna Bhairava*, op. cit. [note 134], pp. 13–14).
180. Although the rainbow is commonly thought of as comprising seven colours, the number of colours is innumerable and actually indeterminate as they blend into each other (Lee and Fraser, *Rainbow Bridge*, op. cit. [note 178], pp. 238, 240–1). The English word 'blank' is cognate with the French *blanc*, 'white', as a common Romanic adjective (*OED*, s.v. 'blank', adj.).
181. Technically, dispersion refers to the separation of colours of white light, and occurs because different wavelengths of light (colours) have different refractive indices (see Kurt Nassau, *The Physics and Chemistry of Color: The Fifteen Causes of Color* [New York: John Wiley, 1983], pp. 214–19).
182. This may seem to contradict what I said above about Ḥokhmah–Binah being the prismatic interface; however, one might think of Ḥesed–Gevurah as a second prism, which coheres the dispersed light that is produced by the complementary *sefirah* called Da'at ('Knowledge'), and which is situated between these two *sefirot*.
183. According to the *Zohar*, Shekhinah, as the foundation stone, and as symbolizing earth, was crystallized from the other *sefirot* (1:231a; Vol. 3, p. 397).
184. Scholem makes the point that it is only 'the finite creature', i.e., the theosophical kabbalist, who gives the appearance of plurality to the default unity of God (*Major Trends*, op. cit. [note 9], p. 224). Cf. Idel's observation that 'man' is the 'prism' through which God is divined (*Kabbalah*, op. cit. [note 24], p. 268). The *Zohar* prevalently employs the metaphor of sight for human consciousness (*River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. [note 28], p. 14), but audition is also important. It is pertinent that Wolfson's compelling analyses are informed by the idea of the prismatic reference in the kabbalistic hermeneutic; e.g., he writes that the acoustic and the ocular 'are widely considered by kabbalists to be two prisms through which a phenomenon is apprehended' (*Language, Eros, Being*, op. cit. [note 65], p. 295).
185. Diffraction occurs as light rays pass through a narrow opening or around an edge and constructively and destructively interfere, so producing a pattern of light and dark bands (fringes). A diffraction grating is a

device with a large number of slits, called *rulings*, or grooves etched on an opaque surface, through which the passage of light forms narrow interference fringes that can be analysed to determine the wavelength of light (Nassau, *Physics and Chemistry*, op. cit. [note 181], pp. 268–80). This is a transmission grating, but there are also reflection gratings (e.g., the pitted surface of a compact disc disperses incident light). Nassau points out that '[t]he most outstanding natural diffraction grating of all is the gemstone *opal*' (ibid., 277).

186. The main characteristic of a crystal is that it exhibits long-range order together with three-dimensional periodicity and translational symmetry, which is shown by the use of X-ray crystallography, where X-rays (which have wavelengths on the order of atomic spacings) are diffracted by the crystalline structure to produce an image of the atomic layers. In 1982 a new class of crystalline material was discovered, initially in metallic alloys, which came to be called quasicrystals, as they exhibit icosahedral symmetry, i.e. quasiperiodic rather than periodic, translational order. See D. Shechtman, et al., 'Metallic Phase with Long-Range Orientational Order and No Translational Symmetry', *Physical Review Letters* 53, no. 20 (12 November 1984): 1951–53; also, Dov Levine and Paul Joseph Steinhardt, 'Quasicrystals: A New Class of Ordered Structures', *Physical Review Letters* 53, no. 26 (24 December 1984): 2477–80. This suggests that the ordinary state of human consciousness, as vacillating between the mundane and divine realms, is the state of being a quasi-crystal.

187. A line spectrum is a pattern of discrete frequencies, i.e., colours, produced by excited chemical elements as shown by a spectroscope. An emission, or bright-line spectrum, is given off by a hot rarefied gas, while an absorption, or dark-line spectrum is produced when a cooler, rarefied gas sits between the spectroscope and a hotter, continuous source (Stanley Wyatt, *Principles of Astronomy*, 2nd ed. [Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1971], pp. 312–13). By analogy, we might say that the the mind is a spectroscope for observing the presence of God. If God is a continuous light source then the imagination is the rarefied gas cloud that absorbs and scatters the exciting divine light, which is diffracted by the grating or prism of the understanding. In other words, God is seen discretely, in some particular way, by the mind's eye.

188. It has been said that when the *Merkavah* mystic entered the sixth palace, 'it seemed as though hundreds of thousands and millions of waves of water stormed against him, and yet there was not a drop of water, only the ethereal glitter of the marble plates with which the palace was tessellated' (cited by Scholem, *Major Trends*, op. cit. [note 9], p. 53; cf. the slightly different translation in idem, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. [note 17], p. 18). On the context of this intriguing episode see Daphna Arbel, 'Pure Marble Stones or Water? On Ecstatic Perception, Group Identity, and Authority in Hekhalot and Merkavah Literature', *Studies in Spirituality* 16 (2006): 21–38; and Nathaniel Deutsch, 'Dangerous Ascents: Rabbi Akiba's Water Warning and Late Antique Cosmological Traditions', *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 8 (1998): 1–12.

189. I borrow this phrase from Lee and Fraser, who refer to the rainbow as 'a mosaic image of sunlit rain' (*Rainbow Bridge*, op. cit. [note 178], p. 135).

190. For one kabbalist at least, the natural world was viewed as symbolic of the divine (see Fishbane, *As Light Before Dawn*, op. cit. [note 34], pp. 117–22). He writes that 'Isaac of Akko frequently frames new interpretive insight as the product of an encounter with the natural world—thereby viewing the created realm as alive with symbolic traces of the divine, as filled with hidden markers of the truths of metaphysical reality. The sight of the physical eyes, engaged with the phenomena of the natural world, reads earthly reality as a symbolic text, an interpretive cipher for the deep structure of the divine' (117–18).

191. Verse 59 of the *Paramārthasāra* (in *Introduction to Tantric Philosophy*, op. cit. [note 121], p. 225). In general, the search for divine realization is 'the Wishfulfilling Gem of one's own nature', as the commentator Bhagavadutpala explains in his commentary on the *Spandakārikā*s (*Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. 140). See above, note 57, for a correspondence in kabbalah.

192. Abhinavagupta writes: 'As the clear crystal assumes the shades of varied colors, so the Lord himself contains the kaleidoscope of forms of gods, men, animals and plants' (*Paramārthasāra*, kā. 6; *Introduction to Tantric Philosophy*, op. cit. [note 121], p. 89; with Yogarāja's commentary at pp. 89–92; Bansat-Boudon glosses that '[t]he idiom "the kaleidoscope of forms" is an attempt to render the abstract noun *rūpatva*, in the sense that a kaleidoscope represents a capacity holding within it an infinity of discrete forms' [p. 89, n. 353]). Similarly, the Goddess proclaims: 'In the same way as crystal etc., being extremely transparent, when tinted by flowers such as the hibiscus (*japā*) cannot be perceived in its original state, I, also being transparent [i.e. unqualified], cannot be perceived by people apart from the palpable objects created through my decisive will. That does not imply that I do not exist there (separately from such objects)' (*Lakṣmī Tantra* 14.36–37; p. 76). See also the citation from the *Saṃvitprakāśa* (*Light of Consciousness*) by Bhagavadutpala (*Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. 149).

193. Abhinavagupta remarks in his *Mālinīślokavārttika*: 'The nature of appearance is known as "becoming aware" [of the objects that appear], otherwise the light, even though coloured by objects, would be like [that of] jewels etc. [which are coloured by objects but not conscious of them]' (1.29ab–30ab; in Hanneder, *Abhinavagupta's Philosophy*, op. cit. [note 81], p. 62). (See also above, note 85.) Kerry Martin Skora notes that whereas Utpaladeva used the term *sphaṭika* ('crystal') Abhinavagupta used the term *ratna*, ('jewel') ('Consciousness of Consciousness: Reflexive Awareness in the Trika Śaivism of Abhinavagupta' [PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2001], p. 189).
194. A photonic crystal is a periodic microstructural material in which some narrow bands of wavelength are unable to propagate, due to the effects of reflection and refraction. They are to be found occurring naturally in sparkling gem opals and colourful butterfly wings. Industrially, the potential applications include their use in optical fibres, ultrawhite pigment, radio-frequency antennas, light-emitting diodes, and photonic integrated circuits (see Eli Yablonovitch, 'Photonic Crystals: Semiconductors of Light', *Science* 285, no. 6 [2001]: 47–55).
195. Abhinavagupta writes that Śiva displays himself in reality by 'the glorious superabundance of his own energies' (*Paramārthasāra*, kā. 4; in *Introduction to Tantric Philosophy*, op. cit. [note 121], p. 77). Śakti is the one 'who rests in the centre of the solar orb' (*Lalitā-Sahasranāma* [trans. Joshi, op. cit., note 151], name 275, p. 146; cf. name 452: 'She is possessed of effulgence' [p. 187]; also name 596, 'She resembles the Sun' [p. 211]). The *Lakṣmī Tantra* exclaims: 'My brilliance, which is the ever active blissful consciousness, is always (matchlessly) bright' (part of 50.117–21; p. 345). These references typify a Śākta perspective, where Śakti (Lakṣmī) is the source of the radiance. The term 'superradiant' is used in atomic physics to refer to the intense emission of light by a coherently radiating collection of atoms (Marlan O. Sculley and Anatoly A. Svidzinsky, 'The Super of Radiance', *Science* 325 [18 September 2009]: 1510–11).
196. Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape*, op. cit. (note 5), p. 174.
197. Ibid., p. 175. Wolfson remarks: '*Shekhinah* vis à vis the rest of the *sefirot* is characterized as pure passivity and receptivity; like a mirror or prism, the *Shekhinah* reflects the luminous but invisible forms from above' (*Through a Speculum*, op. cit. [note 9], p. 274).
198. *On the Mystical Shape*, op. cit. (note 5), p. 177.
199. I would argue that Shekhinah is akin to Śakti as an electric and electrostic force. The electrostatic metaphor is applicable in both tantra and kabbalah because polarity is thought to exist at all levels. Accordingly, one can say that the Godhead is like an electric dipole, with Śakti–Shekhinah as the positive pole and Śiva–Tiferet as the negative pole. Similarly, the earth–heaven axis is a dipole, one in which human beings are electrically charged entities moving between the two worlds, in a fluctuating mood of mundane and divine consciousness. In the steady state of mystical contemplation, of being with God, it is to be electrically neutral, a balance of forces between Earth and God. It is a condition of electrostatic equilibrium, of being held in the stasis of divine awareness.
200. It may equally be said that God is akin to a magnetic field where *śakti–shekhinah* is the magnetic force. We mediate the presence of God in the world. Stephen Palmquist has argued that Kant's theological standpoint can suitably be characterized as panentheistic, since human beings as moral interpreters are the mediating agent between God and the world ('Kant's Moral Panentheism', *Philosophia* 36 [2008]: 17–28).
201. If the human body, as composed of mineralized water, serves as a pathway for conducting electricity, and if *śakti–shekhinah* is understood as being akin to an electric current, then she is the *flowing light* (*fliessende Licht*) of God—to borrow a telling phrase from a thirteenth-century Christian mystic, Mechthild von Magdeburg (ca. 1208–ca. 1282). I have elsewhere explored the evocative use of imagery used by Mechthild and the purported author of a Śākta tantra text: 'The Dynamic of Sexuality in the Mystic Way: A Comparative Investigation into the Divine Imagery in the Texts *The Flowing Light of the Godhead* and *Saundaryalaharī*' (master's thesis, University of South Australia, 2000). The full text is available at http://adelaide.academia.edu/PaulCMartin.
202. See *Zohar* 1:92a (Vol. 2, p. 81) and 194b (Vol. 3, p. 190). Metaphorically, the state of divinity, or divine consciousness, is like a solenoid. A solenoid is a loop of wire that is wound into a cylindrical helix, and an electric current running through the wire will induce a magnetic field. By analogy, a human being acting under divine grace behaves like a solenoid, inasmuch as the wire of the mind is wound around the cylinder of the spine, and *śakti–shekhinah* is the electric current that induces the magnetic state of mystical consciousness.
203. Kant wrote his 'third critique', namely the *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, in two editions, in 1790 and 1793, but they do not substantially differ, and were published as Vol. 5 of *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*. I shall refer to the translation by Eric Matthews and Paul Guyer, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), with the German pagination (or section) followed by

the English pagination. I have considered in some detail the application of Kant's critique of judgement to Christian mysticism in my doctoral thesis, op. cit. (note 163), pp. 256–310.

204. Kant believed that the 'judgement of taste', i.e., a judgement of beauty, is made with no regard to 'how I depend on the existence of the object', but rather with 'what I make of this representation in myself' (5:205; p. 91). Elsewhere, he seeks to distinguish 'free beauty (*pulchritudo vaga*)' and 'adherent beauty (*pulchritudo adhaerens*)', where '[t]he first presupposes no concept of what the object ought to be; but the second does presuppose such a concept and the perfection of the object in accordance with it' (§16; p. 114). The ordered construction of the supernal light realized as the *sefirot* and *tattva*s is a dependent beauty, given that it is meant to conceptually arrange the realm of God.

205. In the sections on the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' (1–22 with the General Remark, 5:203–44; pp. 89–127), Kant basically argues that aesthetic judgement involves mere reflection in contemplation without concepts. The fitting connection, or concordance, between imagination and understanding is without determinate end (*Zweck*), and as such, the cognitive faculties are in 'free play': it is a 'purposiveness without purpose' (*Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck*). He summarizes:

> I have already pointed out that an aesthetic judgment is of a unique kind, and affords absolutely no cognition (not even a confused one) of the object, which happens only in a logical judgment; while the former, by contrast, relates the representation by which an object is given solely to the subject, and does not bring to our attention any property of the object, but only the purposive form in the determination of the powers of representation that are occupied with it. The judgment is also called aesthetic precisely because its determining ground is not a concept but the feeling (of inner sense) of that unison in the play of the powers of the mind, insofar as they can only be sensed. (5:228; p. 113)

For a recent fine analysis of the philosophical difficulties evidenced in Kant's critique of aesthetic judgement see Kenneth F. Rogerson, *The Problem of Free Harmony in Kant's Aesthetics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009).

206. Kant argues that whereas agreeable satisfaction, or the 'taste of the senses' (*Sinnen-Geschmack*) is only a private consideration, a beautiful satisfaction as a 'taste of reflection' (*Reflexions-Geschmack*) is judged to be so for everyone (§§6–8; pp. 96–101). He argues for the expectation of universal assent in the beautiful in the 'Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgements', §§30–38 and Remark (pp. 160–71).

207. In the 'Analytic of the Sublime' (specifically §§23–29) Kant argues that the sublime is an indeterminate concept of reason, and is a 'negative pleasure' (displeasure), since it concerns the limitlessness of a formless object, which is not to be found in nature, but rather in the ideas represented in a 'supersensible' faculty. So the sublimity is found in the disposition of the mind and not in the objective world. He posits the 'mathematically sublime' and the 'dynamically sublime', where the former relates the estimation of the magnitude of something to the progressive inverse movement of apprehension and comprehension, while the latter refers to the power of nature generating fear in us which can none the less be resisted and so inspires a comparative recognition of the superiority of the human mind over nature.

208. It might be said that navigating in the divine light involves a gyroscopic realization, since the wheel of imagination spins freely about the axis of understanding and precesses under the perpendicular torque of reason. A gyroscope is '[a] device that is used to define a fixed direction in space or to determine the change in angle or the angular rate of its carrying vehicle with respect to a reference frame' (*McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology*, s.v. 'Gyroscope'; Vol. 8, p. 315). Hence the mind is oriented to God by the imaginative understanding of the *sefirot* and *tattva*s.

209. Kant distinguishes art from nature as the original and exemplary production of an intentional work achieved through conceptual freedom (§43; pp. 182–83). Beautiful art is to be regarded as nature in that it is free of arbitrary rules, and requires a special talent, or natural gift, namely 'genius', which 'is the inborn predisposition of the mind (*ingenium*) *through which* nature gives the rule to art' (5:307; p. 186). Genius moreover is 'a faculty for apprehending the rapidly passing play of the imagination and unifying it into a concept' (5:317; p. 195).

210. Kant asserts this: 'A beauty of nature is a *beautiful thing*; the beauty of art is a *beautiful representation* of a thing' (5:311; p. 189). Furthermore, as distinct from judging natural beauty, artistic beauty is based on the presupposition of an end to which the work is directed, which is 'the perfection of the thing', and which is 'to be taken into account' (ibid., p. 190).

211. Kant argues that the aesthetic significance of 'spirit' (*Geist*) lies in its animating (or 'quickening') the mind, and so it is 'the faculty for the presentation of *aesthetic ideas*', by which he 'mean[s] that representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., *concept*, to be adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible' (5:314; p. 192). He goes on to say that imagination, 'as a productive cognitive faculty', actively transforms the data provided by nature into something that 'steps beyond nature', and such representations of the imagination can be called *ideas*, since they 'strive toward something lying beyond the bounds of experience, and thus seek to approximate a presentation of concepts of reason (of

intellectual ideas)'; and equally, 'no concept can be fully adequate to them, as inner intuitions'. It is the art of poetry which fully demonstrates aesthetic ideas (ibid; pp. 192–93). Of course, it could be argued that the *sefirot* and *tattva*s are concepts.

212. Kant's view is that to the concept of an object there belongs not only logical attributes but also aesthetic attributes, and through these 'supplementary representations of the imagination' the concept is aesthetically enlarged 'in an unbounded way'. They give 'the imagination cause to spread itself over a multitude of related representations, which let one think more than one can express in a concept determined by words; and they yield an *aesthetic idea*, which serves that idea of reason instead of logical presentation' (5:315, p. 193). The kabbalist and tantric, it might be said, have a genius, a talent for the art of divine consciousness, which is indeed inspired; but they also have 'taste', or the power of judgement, which allows them to guide their genius and to make their ideas tenable, 'capable of an enduring and universal approval' (see 5:319; p. 197). In short, the articulation of divinity is a work of art. A metaphor by Joseph Cannon has an appealing relevance here: 'A work of art is like an utterance. Genius speaks like an oracle; taste translates oracular speech into a cosmopolitan vernacular' ('The Moral Value of Artistic Beauty in Kant', *Kantian Review* 16, no. 1 [March 2011]: 113–26 at 118).
213. The sole principle of the power of aesthetic judgement, according to Kant, is to be found in the idealism of the purposiveness of nature and art (§58; pp. 221–25). He observes that the 'beautiful formations' in nature, such as those found in 'flowers, blossoms, indeed the shapes of whole plants', and especially in 'the manifold and harmonious composition of colors', is evidence of the 'aesthetic purposiveness of nature' as being amenable to 'the aesthetic use of our power of judgment'. This formative process 'takes place through *precipitation*', a sudden movement from a fluid to a solid, 'which transition is also called *crystallization*', and which is evident in the 'artistic-appearing and extremely beautiful figure[s]' of snowflakes. One commentator has remarked that this 'crystallization' can be spoken of 'as a metaphor for a process by which the vague or fluid play of the imagination and the understanding is suddenly captured in a form' (Rudolf A. Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of the* Critique of Judgment [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990], p. 64).
214. Kant posits an association between the fine arts and moral ideas (5:326, p. 203; cf. 5:356, p. 230, where he states that 'taste is at bottom a faculty for the judging of the sensible rendering of moral ideas'). Given that the judgement of taste is meant to be disinterested and nonconceptual, whereas moral ideas involve a conceptual interest, he seeks to justify this connection by relating them symbolically (§59; pp. 225–28).
215. Alper refers to Śaivism as a 'tidal' theology ('Śiva and the Ubiquity of Consciousness', op. cit. [note 83], p. 385). In commenting on verse 129 of the *Vijñānabhairava*—'Towards whichever object the mind moves, one should withdraw it from there at that very moment. By thus leaving it without support, one will become free from mental agitation'—Lakshman Joo refers to this state of letting the mind roam unhindered across the objective world as the 'tideless state of God consciousness' (*Vijñāna Bhairava*, p. 154 [cf. above, note 134]). I note as well that Ariel writes of the way in which 'God is an amalgam of dynamic powers perpetually in a state of ebb and flow' (*Kabbalah*, op. cit. [note 18], p. 37).
216. In his commentary on verse 101 of the *Vijñānabhairava*—'If one makes one's mind stable in the various states of desire, anger, greed, delusion, intoxication or envy, then the Reality alone will remain which is underlying them'—Lakshman Joo writes that the saintly *yogi* is 'broad-minded just like the ocean', and just as waves on the ocean do not disturb the ocean deep, so the emotions do not disturb the spiritual deep (in *Vijñāna Bhairava*, op. cit. [note 134], pp. 120–1).
217. Alper waxes poetic in referring to the notions around 'immersion in consciousness which is often apprehended as a sea of light', which suggests the 'imaginal explication' of '*prakāśa* as spatial effervescence, and *prakāśa* as the sea at the heart of all things'. He goes on to say: 'The theology of *prakāśa* speaks not only the language of scientific prose, but also in what one might call a language of spiritual and emotional liquidity. It hints at the dissolution of ordinary ego consciousness, at immersion in the cave, the bottomless center of all phenomena; it seems to speak of overflowing, being brimful, of being afloat in the depths of the sea' ('Śiva and the Ubiquity of Consciousness', op. cit. [note 83], p. 385). Utpaladeva extols the utterance of the sweet name of Śiva as giving the flow of nectar (Constantina Rhodes Bailly, *Shaiva Devotional Songs of Kashmir: A Translation and Study of Utpaladeva's* Shivastotravali [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987], 4.13–14; p. 45). A common trope is that awareness of Śakti (Devī) is to receive the honeyed light of divinity; see, e.g., *Saundaryalaharī*, verses 60 and 63 (in *Saundaryalaharī*, op. cit. [note 178], p. 72). Saint Ephrem describes the thirsting joy of the fragrant breezes of Paradise, as the senses delight in these luxuriant waves of beautiful light (see Hymn IX, in St. Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise*, trans. and comm. Sebastian Brock [New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990], esp. pp. 139–47).
218. Needless to say, this broad generalization does not do justice to the differences and nuances that can be found within these traditions.

219. Somānanda expounds in his *Śivadṛṣṭi* that the first stirring of Śiva's will as he manifests his consciousness into what will become the universe is like a sudden excitement, which is like the moment of tension in the water just before it breaks into waves: 'One understands eagerness when one casts a glance at the first movement of waveless water becoming extremely rough, and one sees it in the initial trembling of a hand becoming a fist' (verses 13cd–14cd; in John Nemec, *The Ubiquitous Śiva: Somānanda's* Śivadṛṣṭi *and His Tantric Interlocutors* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], pp. 118 and 119; and see Nemec's comment at p. 27).
220. The application of concepts of electromagnetism to concepts of theology has been a rich area of investigation. Lawrence W. Fagg has argued that since the electromagnetic interaction underpins the coherence and structure of matter, and actively governs the interplay of atomic and molecular forces, including the nervous system, it is a useful analogy for positing as the physical ground for an awareness of God's immanence in the natural world. See his *Electromagnetism and the Sacred: At the Frontier of Spirit and Matter* (New York: Continuum, 1999); idem, 'Sacred Indwelling and the Electromagnetic Undercurrent in Nature: A Physicist's Perspective', *Zygon* 37, no. 2 (2002): 473–490. However, he cautions that the analogies to be drawn in this regard are just that, and not an actual reality of the being of God; that is to say, electromagnetic concepts merely provide a physical means for accessing (the idea of) God's immanence. He admits that a strong version of his thesis would be in accord with Whitehead's process theology, in which the electromagnetic interaction is a physical correlate for God's immanence (*Electromagnetism*, pp. 20, 116). This would probably be my view.
221. In his glossarial remarks, Matt adverts to the fact that colours are just specific frequencies and wavelengths of light (*Zohar*, Vol. 1, p. 108, n. 9; and ibid., p. 196, n. 717).
222. Aristotle insisted that the rainbow was composed of three colours, red, green, and purple (Lee and Fraser, Rainbow Bridge, op. cit. [note 178], p. 107–8).
223. Aristotle describes seven basic colours, namely black, blue, green, purple, red, yellow, white (*On Sense and Sensible Objects*, 442a; in Aristotle, *On the Soul/Parva Naturalia/On Breath*, trans. W.S. Hett. The Loeb Classical Library 8 [1936; repr., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000], p. 245). Various later writers suggested a range of colours, from three to eleven, until Isaac Newton settled on seven colours, on the basis of an analogy with the musical diatonic scale, A through G (John Gage, *Color and Meaning: Art, Science, and Symbolism* [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999], p. 132).
224. Lee and Fraser, *Rainbow Bridge*, op. cit. (note 178), pp. 208–9. Aristotle explains that colours are proportioned as white and black particles, in a numerical ratio not unlike musical intervals (*On Sense and Sensible Objects*, 439b; p. 233).
225. On Shekhinah as gateway see Ariel, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 18), p. 98. It is said in the *Vijñānabhairava* that Śakti is like the light of a lamp or the rays of the sun in allowing the differentiated points of space to be known, and in the same way it is by her energy that Śiva can be understood (verse 21; in *Vijñāna Bhairava*, op. cit. [note 134], p. 19, with Swami Lakshmanjoo's commentary). I note Dyczkowski's statement: 'Thus the conclusion (*siddhānta*) they teach is, as one commentator puts it, the final conclusion of all the Tantras, namely, that Śiva is one's own most authentic spiritual identity, and that He is the pure conscious nature (*cidātmā*) that through, and as, its spontaneous, recurrent activity is the ground, source and ultimate end of all things' (in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 84], p. 57).
226. I note the remark by Sthaneshwar Timalsina that '[t]antric experience dismantles the boundary between this-worldly and that-worldly, between the spiritual and the corporeal' ('Metaphor, *Rasa*, and *Dhvani*: Suggested Meaning in Tantric Esotericism', *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 19 [2007]: 134–62 at 145–46).
227. A standing wave occurs as waves with the same wavelength and amplitude travelling in opposite directions constructively and destructively interfere (Herman Y. Carr and Richard T. Weidner, *Physics from the Ground Up* [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971], pp. 592–95). This may happen by reflection at a boundary; and so by analogy, this boundary can be the wall of Shekhinah–Śakti.
228. Paul Guyer reminds us that by 'representation' Kant means 'presentation to consciousness', as distinct from its 'ordinary sense of a (perhaps perfect) reproduction' (*Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 2nd ed. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997], p. 173).
229. Or, put another way, imagining the black light of the infinite God can only ever be realized as a dreamlike experience. Wolfson writes of *Keter* that it

> …is the achromatic peak of the color spectrum, the translucent invisibility that occasions the showing of all visions through the black opacity of *Malkhut*, the prismatic periphery at the other end of the spectrum, although, as I have duly noted, the first and last of the sefirotic gradations are as much a circle as a line, and thus the absolute fullness of light in the whiteness of *Keter* and the absolute emptiness of light in the blackness of *Malkhut* are identically different in virtue of being differently identical. What we see in the dream, therefore, is an archetypal image cast

from and upon the screen of the blank space of infinity mirrored in the infinity of the blank space that is deflected in the imagination of each individual.

See Elliot R. Wolfson, *A Dream Interpreted Within a Dream: Oneiropoiesis and the Prism of Imagination* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), p. 252.

230. My thoughts here go to the way in which the mellow light of the late afternoon sun entering a room can make visible the dust particles that swirl in the air (i.e., Brownian motion). It is said that when the sun, i.e., Tiferet, gazes upon the dust of the earth, i.e., Shekhinah, then gold is produced, which symbolizes the wealth of wisdom (*Zohar* 1:249b–250a; Vol. 3, p. 536, and Matt's notes thereto). Elementally, Tiferet is symbolized by air, and Shekhinah by earth (or dust) (Matt, *Zohar*, Vol. 4, p. 84, n. 51).